

MILITARY CHAPLAINS'

REVIEW

1972

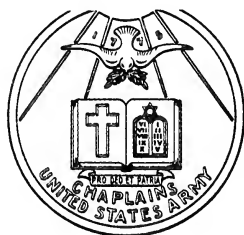


MILITARY CHAPLAINS'

REVIEW

VOL. 1, NO. 1

MINISTRY TO BLACKS



JANUARY, 1972

PREFACE

The *Military Chaplains' Review* is designed as a medium in which those interested in the military chaplaincy can share with chaplains the product of their experience and research. We welcome articles which are directly concerned with supporting and strengthening chaplains professionally. Preference will be given to those articles having lasting value as reference material.

The *Military Chaplains' Review* will be published quarterly. The opinions reflected in each article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Chief of Chaplains or the Department of the Army.

Articles should be submitted in duplicate, triple spaced, to the Editor, Military Chaplains' Review, United States Army Chaplain Board, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland 20755. We also solicit tapes of important speeches given at chaplain conferences and various other meetings.

Use of funds for printing of this publication has been approved by Headquarters, Department of the Army, 7 September 1971.



Chaplain (Major General) Gerhardt W. Hyatt

The publication of this initial volume of the *Military Chaplains' Review* is a signal event in the history of our branch. It means that a medium for the dissemination of scholarly articles and research findings has been provided. Since our whole reason for being chaplains must always be tied first to religious ministration, the contents will be that which will assist military clergymen in their very special calling. The publications should also speak to the most vital problems faced and possibilities seen in the ripe fields and vineyards where chaplains labor. My hope is that the tremendous resources of scholarship and experience which are in our ranks and available to us in the religious groups we represent will be reflected in a growing collection of volumes across the years.

GERHARDT W. HYATT
Chaplain (Major General), USA
Chief of Chaplains

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Dr. Henry H. Mitchell



Chaplain John A. DeVeaux, Jr.



Reverend James A. Thomas, Sr.



Father Clarence Joseph Rivers



Chaplain Sylvester L. Shannon

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The first issue of the *Military Chaplains' Review* contains speeches, discussion comments and conclusions of a conference focused on "Ministry to Blacks" sponsored by the US Army Chaplain Board, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. The conference examined ways in which the rich religious heritage of black Americans might be employed in Army chapel programs for the mutual benefit of blacks and non-blacks. The participants attempted to determine those elements of worship, preaching, congregational participation, and social activism which could strengthen the ministries of chaplains of all religious groups.

In no way did the conference reflect any desire to segregate chapel services on the basis of race or to initiate special services for black people. The basic concern was to retain and increase the salutary mingling of all peoples in their devotion to their common Father.

Papers were presented by Dr. Henry H. Mitchell, Professor at Colgate Rochester Divinity School and author of *Black Preaching*; the Reverend James A. Thomas, Sr., Minister of Christ United Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia; Father Clarence Jos. Rivers, Priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, author of *Reflections* and *Celebration*, and a noted black Catholic liturgical expert in America; Chaplain (MAJ) John A. DeVeaux, Jr., faculty member of the US Army Chaplain School; and Chaplain (MAJ) Sylvester L. Shannon, student at the Chaplain School.

In addition to members of the US Army Chaplain Board, key chaplains from the continental United States attended the conference.

Chaplain (LTC) Roland F. Day
Office of the Chief of Chaplains
Department of the Army, Washington, DC

Chaplain (LTC) Robert G. Swager
US Continental Army Command
Fort Monroe, Virginia

Chaplain (LTC) Herminio Diaz
Office of the Post Chaplain
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland

Chaplain (MAJ) Ezra Everett
Office of the Post Chaplain
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland

Chaplain (CPT) Raymond Guidrey
Walter Reed Army Medical Center
Washington, DC

Chaplain (LTC) William M. Nagata
Letterman General Hospital
Presidio of San Francisco, California

Chaplain (CPT) Connie S. Stamps
Fort Carson
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Chaplain (MAJ) Lawrence T. David
Office of the Post Chaplain
Fort Riley, Kansas

Chaplain (MAJ) Ray E. Miller
Office of the Post Chaplain
Fort Lewis, Washington

Chaplain (CPT) Joseph Tumpkin
Office of the Post Chaplain
Fort Hood, Texas

Chaplain (CPT) Kenneth Edwards
Office of the Post Chaplain
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

THE PREACHING MINISTRY TO BLACKS

By Dr. Henry H. Mitchell

It is heartening to know that we are at last beginning to be aware that black folk *are*, that they are human, that they have feelings, and, indeed, a whole separate culture. America has forced blacks to maintain this separate culture, and we are here to survey the implications of this different cultural framework for ministry to blacks by chaplains in the armed services. My area of special interest has to do with *preaching* to blacks, and before I go into details, I would like to deal with some understandings on which this discussion is based.

THE OPENNESS OF BLACKS

The first fundamental understanding is that blacks are open to good preaching. The soul utterance of pastors is still capable of drawing great crowds. The most cynical black involved in dealing with large groups will, in spite of himself, resort to the very preaching tradition which he claims to abhor. Unlike many other cultures, it is not yet common to hear blacks say, "Don't preach to me!" with all the negative connotations which this indicates about the proclamation of the Gospel. The preaching event is still a "big thing" in black culture.

It might be added that experiences with whites, both in churches and in seminary, would seem to indicate that good preaching among them is nowhere near so dead as is often assumed. There are all sorts of explanations for the cleavage between pulpit and pew in the white church, but one of them is sure to be the fact that white schools have counseled against the feelings and folk-level theology common to the black pulpit. In other words, the pastor is perceived as having "quit preaching." I dare to believe that what we do here may help to restore power to whites preaching to whites, even as it seeks to yield bread to starving blacks in a weary land. And I firmly believe that when the white pulpit does recover power, it will be able to speak prophetically when necessary with nowhere near the present threat to its existence. More to our purposes here, it will be possible to minister to the deepest needs of all men when we employ some of

the insights which are highlighted by the black religious experience.

THE BREAKDOWN OF BARRIERS

A second understanding, which should free us for ministry, is the fact that, in a great many cases, color and race may be only temporary barriers to the acceptance of preaching. (I speak here to the issue of how white chaplains can minister to blacks.) Cultural aspects and stylistic features are the major issues in communication from the pulpit. In other words, the identity formed in the hearer's ear is prone to take precedence over the image he perceives with his eye. Nowhere is this more evident than in the world of music, where blacks now admit that they cannot distinguish black from white by ear. No longer is it unique to hear blacks steeped in the street culture of the ghetto humming tunes made famous by white singers. What has happened is that they have "forgiven" them for being white, because the singers have joined the blacks inside their culture. It was this process in reverse which long went by the label "integration." Blacks were forgiven their blackness so long as they joined whites in their own culture, on their own familiar, safe grounds. The problem of racial alienation will not be solved by the creation of a superculture or the triumph of one over another. It will be solved by increased two-way traffic over a two-way bridge between cultures. The heavier the two-way traffic, the narrower the chasm will become, by an important and little understood process called acculturation.

It must be further understood that no man is totally incapable of *some* multi-cultural, multi-identity skills. Blacks have *had* to excel at this for centuries. The Apostle Paul was rather good at it also. He said to the Corinthians (I Cor. 9:22b) that he was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some. What is meant here is not a chameleon, but a person who knows well what his primary identity is, a person who also has the Pauline skill to join many others "inside" their "bag" or identity, so as to diminish social, linguistic, and other signals of distance. It is a demanding task. But many of the wretched and oppressed of the earth have long been masters of it.

This is not to propose phony imitation of surface cultural phenomena. It is simply to propose that one can so accept, focus attention on, admire, and be generally open to people that he in fact becomes like them *unconsciously*. Just as speech traits are acquired by children, in an unconscious effort to avoid contrast with those whom they relate to most, so must the chaplain be open to identify with every type and description of mankind in his care.

He will still be who he is and unashamed of it, but he will be flexibly "made all things" to all kinds and conditions of men.

Every now and then a chaplain becomes aware that he has, in fact, been unusually effective with a wide variety of men. He is prone to think of it as accidental, or a special act of blessing by the Holy Spirit. The latter can never be ruled out, but human behavior and response is calculably more responsive to the ministry that calls forth familiar images in familiar styles. And almost any chaplain will succeed at this occasionally. It is our purpose to open channels whereby the Holy Spirit may do it more often.

BLACK PULPIT TRADITION

May I conclude these understandings with the sharing of my own experience this very semester, as I have joined a white colleague in the teaching of a "preaching lab." What I have had to say about the nature and techniques of preaching has often been more enthusiastically received by whites than by blacks. The reason is fairly obvious. The concepts are new to the former. Long road-tested and taken for granted by blacks, they have the impact of glaring new insights for whites. I have real reservations about projecting anything I have prepared as "new," but I must confess that my students' gratitude may have given me more confidence than I would have had otherwise. If you are from a tradition that takes what I say for granted already, be assured that I shall not feel undone. Rather, I shall simply take genuine comfort in the fact that what I have come to know and treasure as black pulpit tradition is well ahead of what I might have thought it was, in terms of being or becoming universally accepted.

At the other end of the spectrum of response to black preaching is a type which thinks of it as coming out of the last century. I have had a black student from a prestigious white seminary suggest that I was teaching the emulation of the public speaking techniques of a well-known white Southern governor. In response, I would gladly plead guilty to at least using culture whose roots are well *over* a hundred years old. Culture doesn't change that fast, except where a few elite make rapid changes to reflect the changing vogues of academia. The only way to destroy the religious culture of the common people, however, is to destroy the bearers of that culture. In that they yet live in the here and now, their preaching tastes are extremely contemporary, however old their roots may be. To the extent that a growing host of very contemporary hippies, Jesus freaks, and growing-edge-type theological conservatives are sensing the strengths of black religion in general and preaching in particular, black preaching is all the more a

“now” phenomenon. Few preachers of any generation will equal the relevance of a Martin Luther King, Jr., for his time. Thus has the form and deeper content of an almost timeless folk religion (as opposed to the formal, abstract theology of the schools) demonstrated applicability to all sorts of contemporary issues. And a black rendition of “O Happy Day” together with a white version of the black favorite “Amazing Grace” can head the charts of record popularity, while being poured from the lips of people who would not dare deal intellectually (yet) with what they sing.

I hope I will not appear to be anti-intellectual with all this emphasis on folk religion. This is certainly not my purpose. I am simply concerned with the fact that the concepts of trained clergy are generally far removed from the frame of reference of the kinds and classes of people most likely to get drafted. I have had the experience of finishing Union Theological Seminary in New York City only to find that I was trained *away* from the masses of people. It is they who make up the armed services, and it is the masses of *all* races to whom I would hope to help you build bridges.

BUILDING BRIDGES

To build bridges and preaching rapport, we have to start with the role relationships assigned. One of the images of the white minister/chaplain (projected unintentionally, no doubt) is that of conformist and guardian of the system. Indeed, counseling itself is all too often designed to suggest that rebellion against the system is pathological, and that the peace that passeth understanding is found in simply accepting the excesses inevitable where authority is so well defined and concentrated as it is in the military. Other signals which generate this image include a spit-and-polish stance in pulpit delivery, an obvious adherence to protocol and rank distinctions, and a busy preoccupation which is translated as disinterest in a man's personal problems.

As I have stated at length in my book *Black Preaching*, the black proclamation of the Gospel is an intimate dialogue requiring close identity of pastor with people. It does not tolerate the disrespect of being too “common” or unaware of differences in function, but it demands the closeness of a family, of which the preacher/pastor/father is head. This may, at times, have to be achieved on the spot, with no previous exposure, but whether sudden, symbolic, and even synthetic, or born of long association, the sense of intimacy and close identity must be there.

Thus the movement to increase the humane aspects of the military must be *led* by the chaplain. And he must not hide his light neath a bushel, lest he lose all opportunity to reach and help his

preaching audience. He must be seen as standing *with* the soldier at all times and in all kinds of trouble, even when he is powerless to help by changing anything. The black preacher's access to people is unquestionably enhanced by his image of advocate/ombudsman. This response is not uniquely black.

FREEDOM IN WORSHIP

Related to this independence and availability is an image of freedom as a person, which is signalled in many other subtle ways. Regardless of race or culture, the man who stands rigidly in one place while he preaches projects the opposite of freedom. The lack of gestures or the mechanical use of them is likewise indicative of the lack of freedom. The same is true of an overly even or too well modulated voice, or a tense, strident quality. People in bondage demanded the vicarious participation in a freedom and fulfillment of the person which was sometimes referred to as "liberty in the spirit." This requirement that preaching epitomize the liberty of which it speaks is, again, not uniquely black, although it may be much more common among the oppressed and among those strata of society who are authentically "folk-religion" and innocent of religious pretense, so far as using worship as an instrument of social mobility is concerned. The charms of free expression are lost on none, however.

All this hints at the idea that worship among blacks, and others numerically well represented in the armed forces, is a folk phenomenon in which people celebrate life, and in which they express and fulfill their personhood in the praise of God. Whether from the rural white South or the black urban ghetto, and regardless of the theological rhetoric employed, the subtle and profound meaning of freedom in worship is that God does in fact accept man "Just as I am, without one plea." To sense this is to be moved to ecstasy. This is the gut level manifestation of justification by faith, or the absence of any need for conformist, self-concealing works. It is the Gospel for all mankind, "on the hoof" as it were. It must be embraced regardless of how it may destroy worship's role as index to race and/or class, because it nourishes the spirits of all men of whatever social position.

BLACK PREACHING: EXPERIENCE

Against this background, then, what is black preaching, and why is it that pastor, priest or minister in the black ghetto is still primarily referred to as "preacher?" Why is it that the primary role and input of the ordained black is still that of the proclama-

tion of the Gospel? Whatever else he may do, his basic clout stems from his impact in the pulpit. What on earth is he doing there that is so important, and what does this say to the chaplain?

I suppose the most crucial non-universal in black preaching is the fact that the preacher is leading an *experience*. To be sure, he is teaching and leading the liturgy, or whatever you wish to call his priestly functions. But primarily the black preacher is the catalyst used of God to generate a group experience. The instruction which he gives is reinforced by ecstasy and best perceived and internalized in the latter visage. One may know that he *needs* new ideas, theological and otherwise, but the hunger and thirst that fills black churches and chapels is *not* for new or fresh insight. It is for the inspiration and uplift of what is essentially an experience. Of what? It is hard to verbalize. It is like the wind that bloweth where it will. It is being, subtle self-affirmation in a hostile world. It is communion with men and God. It is celebration of the goodness of life, regardless of what seems not so good about it. And it is even new wisdom, received and enjoyed as illumination rather than new "smarts" or intelligence. But it is more than all of this.

BLACK PREACHING: GROUP EXPERIENCE

A closely allied second aspect of black preaching and worship is the fact that it is so unmistakably a group experience. Despite the emphasis on an often solo performance called a sermon, black preaching is so effective partly because the whole group is crucially involved. It is, then, really dialogue and not monologue or solo. The interaction ranges from the intent gaze or smile, as response, through the audible "Amen," to the quite audible and visible shout. All of this response is itself a kind of affirmation of being, a free expression of feeling in an environment of unrestricted acceptance. In the hostile outside world, there are few such opportunities. I suppose it would also be true that the military life offers little room for the ventilation of the feelings of the "real me." But worship can be that oasis in a dry land, lending strength to bear the suppression of self and the fortitude and creativity to go beyond survival to the improvement of the systems of this world.

BLACK PREACHING: CLIMACTIC CELEBRATION

The third characteristic associated with black preaching is that no matter how instructional or hortatory it might be, it is, at its best, *climactically celebrative*. Now I know that the new rhetoric about worship among whites also uses this word "celebrate." In-

deed, the word has been used in various ways for centuries, but there seem to be great hang-ups or inhibitions about actually *doing* it. When whites have managed to break away from the more staid patterns, the break with the past has been so complete as to issue in an “instant” creation called folk worship with, in fact, no real folk roots—and precious little inspiration. On the other hand, blacks have road-tested a kind of folk celebration for a few hundred years. Their culture, both in its unique and its more universal aspects, offers some models with at least some direction to be seriously considered by white pastors and chaplains who would serve, especially, a racially mixed congregation.

* * * * *

At this point I want to depart from my manuscript *and* my white style, and “rap” with you about perhaps seven aspects of black preaching which can be helpfully included in preparation and delivery of chapel sermons, and in the planning of the worship context for those sermons. As I do so, I shall try to be a good example of the freedom and style of which I speak. The paper to be published will, therefore, have to be a transcription of this presentation as well as my manuscript.* And it will, I hope, also include your inputs and the meat of our later dialogue together.

INTIMACY

The first thing one has to say about black preaching is that it begins with an introduction which firmly establishes what I have already outlined as a kind of tone or intimacy between pastor and people. In black culture the preacher simply cannot be a rank stranger who declares from Mount Olympus some great truth. There’s a sense in which this automatically becomes a counter culture in the normal protocol established in the military. What I am simply suggesting is that it ought consciously to be just such a counter culture and it ought to offer a change from the routine relations in military life, just as for instance, church schools should offer a change from the routine of public schools. In other words, if coming to chapel is coming to hear one more dude with a bunch of brass and scrambled eggs on his hat, then you may well be assured that there will be nobody at chapel unless you march him there under orders and that if he gets there he will not listen because black preaching simply must have the kind of intimacy which completely transcends all considerations of rank and all the rest of it. You just simply have to be one person in a family of people if you’re going to preach to blacks, because without this black context there is no black preaching.

* Unfortunately, not all of Dr. Mitchell’s tone comes through in the transcription which follows.

TEXTUAL PREACHING

I have fun as I go across country because while I am very often thought of as an extreme militant, a lot of the things I say are extremely conservative sounding and this is one of them, namely, that there is no such thing as black preaching without a text. Now I know a whole lot of people in our time who have got around to where they preach topically and usually hardly make mention of the word of God as found in what some of us black folk call the Bible, but if you're going to preach to us let me make it very plain, daddy, you better tell me where God said it first. The sermon doesn't have to be expository necessarily—it can be anything you want—but you better be sure to tell me that God said it first. You must tell me where he said it, to whom he said it, etc. This to many people is something of a bother and I can understand this. As I look back, about 34 years ago I preached a trial sermon to become licensed in the Baptist church over in Ohio and I will never forget Deacon Simpson who came to me after and said, "Son, that was a fine beginning," he said, "but let me tell you something, son; don't you ever get up and preach again without a text." And I resisted him for the moment, but I have learned long since that old Deacon Simpson was right. I think this is true for anybody who deals in preaching among blacks, and there are an awful lot of whites in the same bag that wants to know have you heard anything from the Lord. If you are not talking from Him you ain't talking about nuthin'.

THEMES

As one looks at this a third characteristic is that the themes one draws from the Bible must be constantly gut level, existential-grabbing kinds of themes, for black people do not view the Bible in the literalistic, cold, fundamentalist way. The Bible for blacks is a very *living* document. It is as warm and contemporary as previous tradition in Africa which was handed down verbatim for centuries. In other words we depended on this. This has become the matrix for all our treasury, as it were, of insight, and there is no such thing as a real gut level issue that doesn't have a parallel in the Bible and we always feel safer when you combine this utterly contemporary business with its biblical counterpart. One simply does not talk about intellectual concepts and theological jargon. One talks about why things are and what things ought to be done according to the will of God.

I had an interesting experience some years ago which completely reverses the pattern that we are heading for, namely, a pattern of whites perhaps ministering to blacks. I got a phone call

one day from a rather wealthy white lumberman and he wanted me to come and see him. He had heard me preach in his church and he wanted me to come. I discovered when I got there that he just had to talk to me because somehow he thought I would know what to tell him when, as had happened, he had lost his sight in an accident. He was a lumberman, he was blasting stumps to make a road to haul redwood logs out of northern California, and the dynamite didn't go off and he decided it was a dud and he waited and waited and finally he went over to get it—just as he got there it exploded. It completely destroyed his eyes and he wanted to know what had *God* got to say? “Now here I have been more than tithing, I have built whole churches, I have done all sorts of things, and I love the Lord. *Why* did *He* let this happen to me?” Now when you get in the black pulpit you better *know why*. You better have some kind of an answer. Of course I cited to him one of my favorite passages of Scripture which incidentally has many prototypes in early African religious tradition, Romans 8:28, “God works everything together for good to them that love him.” And I said, “Now, brother, I don't know what God will work out of this, but let's assume an attitude of *curiosity*; let's not ask *if* He's going to work out good for us, but let's just set and wonder, ‘Good God A'mighty, what kind of good could You ever get out of this! Knowing, Lord understand, knowing that You will.’ ” I had a great time with that man because this kind of black ministry reached his need and frankly I'd hate to see the phone bill that he racked up calling me to rap on this theme of *curiosity* as opposed to the kind of *questioning* that tears up people's souls. This is what I mean when I say themes must be contemporary, they must be relevant, gut level, existential kinds of things, but they must definitely relate to the Bible.

ANSWERS

A fourth thing that I would say about black preaching is simply that you have to give answers and not questions to the extent that it is possible to give answers. I had a lot of fun in this class I was telling you about, because white preachers are in reaction to a whole lot of pat answers and superconservative foolishness in the pulpit, and they have gone to the other extreme and decided since those cats got too many answers and the answers are wrong, the best thing for us to do is don't give no answers at all. Best thing to do is to go in church and when you climax leave them hanging out there on the hook. Black folks won't put up with that. There won't be no day like that! And the kind of constituency that you have in the military chapel, I suspect, shares this whether they be black or

white. They live in a kind of world that demands a more certain blast on the trumpet. And if you got the bright idea that you can be intellectually stimulating and drop those questions on these cats, you're talking about the wrong bunch, because questions are for intellectual debate under safe, leisurely circumstances—which the man in the military does not enjoy. Let's not fool ourselves. Sure you want to be aware of pat answers; you don't want to get up with a whole bunch of cheap cliches, but let the questions these men have come from their life, not from their pulpit.

Some of you undoubtedly have read my book and certainly again an interesting thing is involved here, because the illustration comes out of a white man's sermon and it's about a white chaplain. The story, as you read it in the last chapter, is a sermon by Dr. Campbell of the Riverside church in which he tells about a Southern Baptist chaplain who actually did not have any answers for a soldier in a particular situation, but who, by simply standing with the man, became a very effective minister of God in the process of simply listening in his office with no answers and standing with him—but doing it in tears. I'm not suggesting that we always have pat answers, but I am suggesting that you don't get up in pulpits and hang people up with questions.

LANGUAGE

A fifth insight is that blacks require everyday language and a whole bunch of illustrations. I think you have probably already detected that I've got two or three kinds of English here and if you read my book you'd know I have a chapter on black English. Language signals a lot of things, and one of the things it signals is distance between people.

I have a lot of fun because I'll go into a pulpit and they will see me get up and they'll say, "O Lord, we ain't gonna get nuthin' today." And then knowing all this I start telling about my grandfather who was third secretary or fourth secretary to the National Baptist Convention, but most of all I use their language, I talk that talk. And I have more people come up to me and say, "Reverend, you know when you got up to preach I thought you weren't gonna do nuthin'; say, I even wonder who you was."* "The minute you opened your mouth," they say, "O Lord, he's one of *us*." Now what they don't know is that, just as I said early in the paper, the ear image took precedence over the eye image, and to this extent every chaplain, it seems to me, needs to know that language is just this important—you must use the language they use and, to the

* The point here is that Dr. Mitchell is not "pure black" and is not readily identifiable as black.

extent that it is natural, you must use their language, their inflections, their everything. Now you've got a big cross-section of men but to the extent that you avoid the seditty—sedate is the white word for it—sophisticated Harvard accent, to the extent that you avoid this, you avoid all the social distance that is implied by these linguistic signals. Nobody is going to listen too long to a cat who gets up being proper, you know! The fact is that if you quote God in very proper language you give people that same distance from God that you give them from yourself. So I have time and again used quotations from the mouth of God and said them in the language of the people.

One of them that I rather enjoy is this one where Peter is resisting going to preach the Gospel to these other folk and to this man down here. He has this vision in Acts and the Lord lets down this blanket or carpet or whatever it was—cloth in front of him with all these things on it—and says, "Arise, Peter, slay and eat," and Peter said, "Nay, Lord, I don't touch no such stuff as that, that's too common and unclean," and the Lord said to him, "Look a here, Peter, don't you be calling nothin' I made common and unclean." Now that's a very accurate, I think, black rendition of the Word of God, but when one hears this, one does not hear at all the seditty kind of ritualistic purist kind of distant died concept, but here is a God who says, "I made it, you rascal. Don't you be calling it dirty!" And this communicates meaning and it communicates a kind of bond between a man and his God which is absolutely essential. It says in language what black Christs say in paintings, namely, that God is to me what I am and not in some other bag. This must be the universal Christ, the universal God who speaks to us in our language, who has our culture and our color because outside our culture and our color is always distance and alienation and oppression. You can see that I am very very strongly of the opinion that language helps to make the sermon.

ILLUSTRATIONS

In addition to this language thing, it seems to me that sermons must be constantly filled with illustrations. The kinds of men we are dealing with are not capable of a whole lot of conceptual thinking. Certainly not conceptual language. They can dig concepts when you paint pictures and you use illustrations, when you make it plain, as we "says." One of the greatest criticisms I had all semester in my preaching lab was that students I was dealing with time after time came up with great rhetoric and great ideas and I, being a professor, could understand what they were talking about. But if you didn't catch it the first time you never would,

because they never did illustrate. Part of it was a matter of not being old enough perhaps to have a whole bunch of illustrations, but when I look at what Jesus did, I don't know that you have to be so old to sit down and use a lost coin or a lost sheep or a lost son or a lily in the field for an illustration. This precisely is where you can get to me. If you simply will not do this, then they are not going to listen to you, not even if you use their language. I had an interesting experience the day before yesterday in a preaching class. One of our black students, a blind fellow incidentally, got up and did a combination of black language and illustration in *one phrase* that just stood right out. He was talking about Jesus and he was saying that Jesus was—well Jesus “didn't have any education, didn't have any money, didn't have any status, didn't have no job, wasn't even *looking* for a job.” Can you imagine anything more graphic in the black ghetto? The distinction is between the people who want to work and the people who have been so crushed that they're not looking for a job. And here is a fellow who, because I finally conned him away from his manuscript, let loose spontaneously with the most graphic phrase I've heard in weeks or months in a pulpit. “*Jesus wasn't even looking for a job; He was a wandering pauper,*” he said. It blows your mind to realize that the Savior we're talking about might very well be on a black block if he were here in the flesh today. He might be thought of as one of those people who wouldn't fit into the system well enough to take a job. You see, what I'm saying is that there is a sense in which this illustration not only builds rapport between us and our audience but in fact becomes the channel whereby people are related to God, as I've said in my book.

Illustrations are best, however, when they are specific narratives and not general references. I've had a lot of students tell me, “Dr. Mitchell, this is an illustration.” They might say, “Take, for instance, the international crisis.” But the most lively and memorable illustrations are stories told in *pictures* painted in which people participate, in which there is a *visual* image, in which people go along in a memorable kind of way, because, as I have already said, black preaching is an experience. You can list 50 illustrations, but people don't identify with those illustrations that quickly, so you simply have to do a much more detailed kind of picture painting or story telling.

We had a student the other day talking about cosmetics as an index to our concerns, our priorities, and that's pretty good. But now the way you talk about cosmetics as an index to our concerns is to say, “Now here's this sister that gits up this morning and she don't spend ten minutes, not ten seconds in prayer. But you should

see her, she done spent one hour and a half in front of that mirror. Now *that's* how she gets ready to talk to God. She stands in front of the mirror and paints and plucks and carries on." Now you see a picture. Then when somebody says, "cosmetics," you've got a completely different and a much more in-depth understanding of what we are talking about when we say priorities. This is the sort of thing that preachers in general need to do and it is certainly the sort of thing that black audiences absolutely demand.

CLIMAX

I suppose the most difficult thing that I have asked students to do, however, has to do with the sequence of points and the weighing of impact. It may seem to some people, when you start doing things like this, you are actually manipulating people. But this isn't my purpose. My purpose is simply to say that if you want to sustain interest, if you want to avoid anticlimax, if you want people to avoid confusion about what the real point is, then you simply have to save your highest impact, your most graphic experience, for the end. It's as simple as that.

I had a young lady come to me—last year I guess it was—and she had a rather well outlined sermon in terms of the sequence of thoughts, intellectually speaking. But when I looked at her illustrations I saw that she had a cancer patient at point *one*, and when she got through telling about that cancer patient the whole thing was going to be over. Everything she did after that was going to be anticlimax, lost and dead. So we had to find a way to revise the sequence of points so that when she told the gripping story of the faith of this terminal cancer patient—that this is the end of it because when you get up this high there is no place else to go. And if you keep dribbling along afterward at a much lower level, you've lost people's interest completely.

I had a student just last week in the same sort of a thing. He was a retired colonel from the Marine Corps, who is finishing seminary next year, an excellent Episcopalian preacher. But here he was with a series of images and the one that really grabbed me was in position *two* in a series that might have been as many as *ten*. He was talking about Jesus dealing with lepers and he said that whereas other people observed sanitation and kept a distance from lepers, Jesus just went up and grabbed them and got real close to them. Well, that was graphic, man, when he was talking about getting involved. And when he was talking about putting your hands on lepers, that got to me! It immediately occurred to me, "Don, you goofed because that is the clincher, that is the kicker, that is the real point, and that ought to be at the end."

Now there are people who, I suppose, say that this is wrong, that you're too busy manipulating getting up to this climax. But I would hasten to suggest to you that almost anything we do artistically speaking is involved in this kind of building up to climax.

I have one good friend who is an excellent preacher who is absolutely opposed to climax; and with his skills he can get away with it. But he'd still be even more of a high impact preacher if he did move to climax. Every story you read has a climax. Every drama you watch has a climax. Every symphony you listen to has a climax. All of these things move to the point and swiftly subside. All I'm saying is if preaching is an experience, if it has these tremendous emotional aspects and if people are in fact governed by their emotions, then preaching must generate the kind of an experience that moves to this point and sees it plainly, impresses it indelibly, and subsides. Personal emotion and involvement are crucial and if we have this too early then the rest of it is nonsense and people simply won't even listen.

Climax is not for me just a matter of getting up there, and as we used to say, "Kill them." You know what I mean, don't you? It seems to me that climax must in fact celebrate or lift up the meat of the message, the content. A great many black sermons that I have heard have had a lot of impact, but they ultimately destroyed the main content of the message because the climax had absolutely nothing to do with the content of the message. You talk about something real good and then you climax Jesus on the cross, or momma in the graveyard, or something like that, and you get people all excited, but excited about something so utterly extraneous to your original point that folks forget all about what you really were talking about. Climax must celebrate the content of the thing, then, that we are talking about.

In my book I mention the climax of a sermon that I did on the subject of the crowd and the Christian. I was talking about the crowd at the triumphal entry and then the crowd that said, "Crucify Him." And I was very seriously concerned about asking this particular church to cease to act as a herd. You might think, well, that's a terribly difficult thing to celebrate, saying to the people, "Stand up and be counted," and "Be a loner," "Be a self-directed person." To use the black expression, "There ain't no gravy in that theme." I don't think there is such a theme as one in which there is no celebration. In this particular sermon I climax with the idea that I didn't want to be in the social 400, I didn't want to be in the top ten best dressed. I named a bunch of numbers that I didn't want to be in and then I said the only number I

wanted to be in was the number John saw. Old folks said when the saints go marching in, Lord, I want to be in *that* number!

Now I wasn't trying to manipulate, I was simply in the process of celebrating content, and if we will follow this kind of discipline we will reach blacks and whites and everybody else, if you got any. We'll be responding tremendously. I spoke in Newark, Sunday, and again the sort of thing I was dealing with, I suppose in the minds of a lot of people, "wouldn't be no gravy in that." I preached on a text, Ezekiel 3:15, where Ezekiel says, "I went over there where they were by the river Chebar and I sat where they sat amazed, seven days." So what I was actually talking about is, sitting where people sit, walk a mile in his shoes, identify with him, understand his problem and realize as Ezekiel did. When he went over there, he went to blow the people out about losing their religion. When he got over there he discovered that it was against the law to go to a church of their faith. Also there were all sorts of problems, theological problems, with the establishment in Jerusalem. They had told them they wasn't supposed to worship nowhere but Jerusalem. So they said in fact, "How can we sing the song of Zion in the strange land?"

I laid all of that basis and then talked about how we deal with the same kind of city where people sit in the alienations of *our* times, between militant and nonmilitant, between generations and all the rest of it. I then came to the end and simply said, "If you think this is too much to ask of anybody, to sit where other people sit, just remember that *God* did it." And I did a typical black story about how in the councils of heaven (working on Jesus' parable about the servant, about the son that went after the servants had been killed) the son said, "I'll go, and I'll sit where they sit. If they sit in hunger, I'll sit in hunger. If they sit in powerlessness, I'll sit in powerlessness." In each case I use the scriptures so that it wasn't just a flight of imagination. Eventually I said, "And if they sit in complete discouragement and feel like God has forgotten them, *I'll* sit where they sit. I hear Him on the cross saying, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'"

Now this was a climax, a very relevant climax, but it was also a black climax, and this, it seems to me, is the kind of thing that every preacher ought to be doing in the pulpit regardless of the group of people to whom he speaks. It seems to me that the chaplain is perhaps among all men the man most required to preach a Gospel that is so powerful and so relevant and so broad scaled, culturally speaking, that it is in fact *the* Gospel, the *whole* Gospel, to the whole *world*.

DISCUSSION COMMENTS

In the discussion which followed, a number of chaplains focused on Dr. Mitchell's emphasis on learning the black dialect. Among these chaplains, Chaplain Miller stated that he would prefer to emphasize dynamism rather than language. "If chaplains are dynamic, really caught up in their preaching, they will communicate." Chaplain Everett sympathized with white chaplains who don't know the black dialect. "My advice to them," he said, "is to talk out of the heart."

In reply Dr. Mitchell agreed with them on the importance of being dynamic and sincere, but he concluded as follows: "I've come to realize, especially after studying linguistics, how much language signals distance. When I changed speech patterns according to the type of congregation I was addressing, I overcame problems which existed in spite of a dynamic approach. My proof text is from St. Paul, 'I have become all things to all men.'"

Continuing to focus on the use of the black dialect, Chaplain DeVaux asked, "When chaplains attempt to use a different cultural language, doesn't it sometimes come across as patronizing?" (The question of how to avoid patronizing blacks when attempting to minister more effectively to their needs would be raised throughout the conference.)

"What is called for is not choreography or staging," Dr. Mitchell replied. "What is needed is an openness to people as people, to other cultures, so that you unconsciously ease into their bag without being phony or patronizing. You need to acculturate by exposure and not by conscious imitation. Incidentally, chaplains from the South have greater exposure to black culture than chaplains from other areas and may be able to use their special insights better in chapel services."

Chaplain Swager saw a barrier which prohibited many chaplains from being open. "The emphasis on being open to people, on accepting other cultures, is well taken," he stated, "but this presupposes a level of security which, I'm afraid, many chaplains do not possess. Until I can accept myself, I can't accept others—I'm hung-up!"

Chaplain DeVaux moved the discussion from the area of style and personality problems to the area of sermonic themes. "All I seem to hear is the theme of comfort—'I'm getting into your bag,' 'I'm standing where you are,' and 'I'm celebrating in spite of discomfort.' I haven't heard anything about challenge, about getting out of this bag and moving forward."

Dr. Mitchell agreed. "Yes, you need to preach a lot more than comfort and survival if blacks will hear you. You need to talk in

addition about spiritual wholeness, about integrity as a person and how you work these things out in life, etc.”

At that point Dr. Mitchell inserted a comment on the diversity of life styles among blacks. “Blackness,” he said, “is not one style; it’s a whole lot of styles. There are many stripes in the black idiom.” Chaplain Gilbert closed the session by reinforcing what Dr. Mitchell had said. “We need to be aware of and understand this fact as we minister to black troops. We have to avoid stereotyping people.”



CONGREGATIONAL PARTICIPATION BY BLACKS

By Chaplain John A. DeVeaux, Jr.

When I was invited to participate in this conference on "Ministry to Blacks," and to prepare a paper under the general title: "Congregational Participation by Blacks," I expressed some negative feelings about both the conference and the assigned topic. I still have some misgivings about both because it is well past the time when this question should have been settled in our nation, if indeed it should ever have been a question at all, and I have an uneasy feeling that an attempt to discover guidelines under this heading may possibly compound our present confusion in race relations.

I recognize, however, that there is an urgent need to help refine the role of the chaplaincy in the present day movement toward including blacks in all aspects of American life, and as I worked on this project I became more and more convinced of the possible usefulness of the conference. Thus what I have to present is offered for the good of the chaplaincy and with the hope that we together will be relevant and effective in our ministry.

I have been asked to look at what we are doing, right or wrong, in the way of adding the character of black lay participation to the chapel programs. This question, if looked at simply, seems to be based on the notion that if someone could outline clearly what kinds of things happen in black congregations and the techniques black ministers use to encourage black laymen to participate in the black church's activities, programs and worship, white ministers could and would inculcate these techniques into their religious programs. Theoretically the result would be greater black participation in chapel programs.

This hope is naive in the face of history, but can be a worthy hope if the basic assumptions are changed. What I intend to do is to show that the participation by blacks in black churches is not essentially Christian in character; that the techniques used by black ministers are quite transparent to the observer who has an understanding of the history of race relations in America; and that the key to increasing congregational participation by blacks is found in attitude more than in skills or knowledge.

In 1964 Joseph R. Washington, Jr., wrote a book entitled: *Black*

*Religions: The Negro and Christianity in the United States.*¹ This book has been disavowed by some black writers and teachers as being too negative a view of black religion.* Some have suggested that Washington himself should disavow his book because it constitutes treason against the cause of black pride. But his descriptions and analyses are, I think, useful both in light of the fact that many young blacks are reassessing the place of the church in their lives, and in the light of the social context in which the black church is set, namely, a society in which blacks have been made to understand that they are not welcome.

I believe that this book should be read, for it at least delineates one point of view about the past and present roles of the black church—a point of view which must be taken into account in any attempt to refine techniques and guidelines for ministering to the men we serve today.

HOW BLACKS WORSHIP

The following is taken from Joseph Washington's description of how blacks worship:

Members of the local congregations affiliated with independent Negro organizations can be depended upon to be more serious about the "religious fellowship" than any other area of their individual and corporate life.

The main event of the week is Sunday morning worship. Those in attendance are there because they like good singing, good speaking, and good fellowship in a restful atmosphere filled with beauty. The popularity of a given church is heavily dependent upon the pastor, who is expected to transcend immediate conditions through sermons filled with imagery, humor, contemporary illustration, good jokes, and original "portraits" of the "wages of sin" presented through exhilarating oratory. The popular preacher is able to identify with the experiences of "Aunt Jane" yet speak the language of her grandson. In addition to being an authority on all things experiential, the pastor who is a showman with a program "has a following."

The people want to be entertained. The church, depending upon its size and location, is an activities center complete with "Rally Day," "Men's Day," "Children's Day," and special Sunday afternoon and evening programs. Musicales, dramas, pageants, movies, concerts, suppers, and "Gospel Singers" are offered as free entertainment throughout the week and are enjoyed by the church and the unchurched without discrimination. The value and quality of the entertainment varies from locale to locale.²

Washington continues as follows:

Excessive emotionalism, dubbed "escapism," characterizes the popular image of the Negro and his religion. Actually, this exuberance is a vestige of the white Baptist and Methodist evangelists, and to a lesser extent the other evangelists, and remains the bond of kinship between Negro and white Protestants, along with organizational procedures. American Negro folk religion committed itself to freedom and equality for the fold through the structures of independent

¹ Boston, 1964.

* See Discussion Comments at end of article.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

Negro religious organizations. Their hopes dashed by the reality of a segregated society, Negroes took refuge in institutional maintenance and emotional fervor as a substitute for militant and direct action. Thus, *there is nothing unique in the worship life of the Negro*. What is taken for uniqueness is but the extreme of what may be found in comparable white congregations.³

A typical worship service will last about two hours, depending upon the length of the singing, prayers, Bible lessons, sermon, collections, announcements, and introduction of guests. The heart of the service is the singing of gospel songs, . . . by a soloist, quartet, or the gospel chorus. Only the "saints" and the "saved" are permitted to "feel the spirit" by breaking out in "shouts of joy," but the less extroverted and ecstatic enjoy a good preacher. . . . The sermon must make alive Bible stories and religious tales which parallel the life of the Negro: Moses and the Egyptian Queen, Lazarus and the Rich Man, The Three Hebrew Children in the Fiery Furnace, The Prodigal Son, and the adventures of Job, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Jonathan, David, Esther, Ruth, and other familiar passages from the Bible. That preacher who is able to preach the whole Bible and not miss a single high point from the Creation through the Crucifixion to the Last Judgment will "be around a while". . . .

The color, enthusiasm, and imagery in the worship of Negroes varies from class level to class level, as does its quality. Independent Negro congregations are pointed out as examples *par excellence* of the special brand of worship which is native to the Negro. In reality, this stereotype is but a variation on the evangelical theme introduced and sustained by white evangelists.

It is understandable that the Negro might be expected to add something of his own to his worship after generations of spiritual ferment. But the fact that he has chosen to place his experience and faith in God within the forms inherited from a severed past, if at times stretching them to their limits, is irrefutable. The obvious response to this situation is that the Negro is characteristically emotional. Yet a more profound reason is that worship is but a means to the end of equality and justice. The eschatological theme in worship is but the expression of frustration in this world, worship being the means of deployment during an era of helplessness.⁴

INVOLVEMENT OF THE CONGREGATION

In black congregations, community fellowship and leadership development are on a par with worship as the dominant interests of the people. The Negro member of a congregation acts as though religious fellowship is his primary means for social acceptance and recognition.

Washington's analysis of this situation is accurate. He writes:

As social centers, Negro fellowships function in the same way as their white counterparts, with the exception that they are more important in the lives of Negroes who are, or at least feel they are, excluded from community organizations. The masses who belong to Negro congregations in institutions separate from whites gain a sense of identity through organized groups. The leisure time of persons with limited education and means is not uncommonly spent in an inordinate worship of and participation in religious activities. . . .

Precisely because the local congregations sponsor many activities which require leaders, they provide opportunities for *recognition and fulfillment*. . . . In a little church there is something for everybody

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-99.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

to do. Every man in the church, as well as every woman, can have an office. . . . Training in leadership begins with attendance at the church school where children who are able to read may have an opportunity to make the report for their class before the whole session. Adult members of Sunday school classes and the pastor support these budding leaders with their enthusiastic encouragement, and in this atmosphere of approval young people discover in early adolescence that regardless of their rejection by society they can achieve acceptance as a leader in the religious fellowship. Those who fail to complete high school but are church-oriented may look forward to recognition as a church school officer, licensed preacher, or functionary on one of the boards. Often the ability to speak persuasively, sing effectively, or record minutes reasonably well are as important as education and experience in a specific field to the attainment of leadership positions. Those who have aspirations can look forward to service as officials of numerous women's auxiliaries and men's groups, members of trustee and deacon boards, and delegates to associations and conventions. . . . In many ways the organized groups of the congregation serve as substitutes for social clubs.⁹

In summary, the outstanding factor in participation in black congregations is that each participant is as concerned to impress his *audience* with his own talents, appearance, or power as he is to lead the congregation to praise God or to seek His will and make His way known in the activities of the social order.

This is what we have come to accept and to enjoy in the privacy of "folkness," but it is not really full participation in Christianity. It is involvement in non-involvement. Black congregations have been forced to use their energy for survival rather than for Christian outreach.

Black politics, social prestige, and entertainment, as well as religion, have been centered in the black church. But there crept into the consciousness of black people quite early, the realization that their politics, social prestige, entertainment and religion are circumscribed by the limits established by whites, so that all these efforts were and remain black. There is black politics and black society. There are black entertainers and black religious leaders. Every effort of blacks has been judged by whites, who are dominant in America, not in relation to the requirements of the whole social order, but in relation to an imaginary and shifting requirement for a sub-human species. Therefore, whatever black churchmen do is seen as a poor imitation of what whites do, or as idiosyncratic of a primitive race. Creativity is neither expected nor welcomed by whites; therefore, it is stifled by segregation and low esteem. And blacks have come to include this structure as a part of the pattern of the social order which is designed to frustrate every black hope.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-82.

WHAT BLACKS BELIEVE

I have suggested earlier that black congregational participation is not essentially Christian in character. This judgment is a twin to the judgment that white congregational participation also is not essentially Christian in character. The primary moving spirit in black congregations is not the Gospel of the forgiving love of God freely given in Christ and the concomitant call to love even the least neighbor which is the proper response to the grace of God. Rather the driving spirit is an emphasis on achieving equality, freedom and justice for blacks. It is centered in racial pride and racial integrity. Blacks are less concerned with sacrificing for the sake of others than they are with getting what is due them. Blacks are hard pressed to identify grace—for that term implies a precious gift that is given even though the recipient could in no way deserve it. Blacks know precious little of gifts. They know most about struggling to get what others take for granted and of having even the basic necessities of human beings snatched away on the grounds that, being worthless, they do not deserve even those. In spite of Christ's admonition, the black churchman is seeking to save his own life, for it is clear to him that otherwise it is lost. What has been taught to him is that his salvation comes in the next world, and not in this one. He has been asked to believe that faith has to do with concern for a sweet by and by, but that he should not be overly concerned with the way he is treated now. His impatience for freedom and justice has brought him to a trust in direct action rather than in a patient, humble turning of the other cheek. He is less inclined to forgive than to strike back. Thus his emphasis on his human dignity threatens the clarity of his full understanding of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Perhaps he can be forgiven because a person who is forced to be a slave must rebel. Only one who chooses slavery because he freely chooses a master can be a *faithful* servant.

Black churchmen, under the cloak of traditional Christian piety, exhibit a belief that through the use of *power*, be it economic, violent or non-violent, man may be forced to do the will of God. Black religion now tends to be superficial, ego-centric, pragmatic and centered in the problems of the present social order.⁷ Since faith has not provided freedom, freedom is re-evaluating faith.

Yet there is no rejection of God as just and merciful—only the rejection of those aspects of Christianity which undergird pa-

⁷ Cf. C. Eric Lincoln, *My Face Is Black* (Boston: 1964), p. 24.

tience, containment, subservience—the aspects which have been historically stressed as being good for blacks. C. Eric Lincoln writes:

How insensate has been the church never to have known (or possibly never to have cared) that from the earliest days of slavery when the mealy-mouthed preachers brought the Pauline doctrine of “servants, obey your masters!” to the compounds around slave quarters, the slaves *knew*! They knew *then* the collusion of the church with the institution dedicated to their dehumanization, and, knowing, they rejected the white man’s spurious doctrine. Hiding in the woods and the swamps, they sang the songs of faith and deliverance (“Oh, didn’t my Lord deliver Daniel!”) and, when they were finally free, they organized their own churches.⁸

THE ORIGIN OF THE BLACK CHURCH

It is of great importance to remember that racial bias is the only reason black churches came into existence. The only religious option American Negroes had for three hundred years was Christianity. Every black congregation is both a symbol of segregation among Christians and a protest against the un-Christian inability of the white man to practice what he has sought to sell to millions of non-whites around the world. The Negro remembers with bitterness that as a slave he accepted the white man’s spiritual teachings only to find that when he became a citizen the teachings did not apply. In order to be a Christian in America the Negro has been required either to organize new churches or denominations, or accept an uncomplimentary status in white churches where his presence is not desired.⁹

So it was with the founding of the denomination of which I am a part. In 1787, a group of Negro Methodists withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. The critical issue was segregation. There Christians, who believed that Christianity and segregation are logical contradictions, went on to found the African Methodist Episcopal Church, with a current membership of more than 1,200,000—the second largest Methodist body in America. Other blacks followed this pattern in other cities and in other denominations. The result has often been stated in the cliché: The most segregated hour in America is Sunday morning at 11 o’clock.

The sordid story of how American white Protestantism reluctantly gave up sanctioning the institution of slavery, but has not yet relinquished the notion that blacks are inferior, is well documented in the book *White Protestantism And The Negro*, by David M. Reimers.¹⁰ He makes it clear that the central focus in the white churches has been racial. Racism carried the day in the

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁰ New York, 1965.

churches of America and the Gospel was made to accommodate the social order. Says Reimer:

Under slavery whites had presumed Negroes to be innately inferior and had segregated them in the churches; this attitude and this condition were simply carried over into the post Civil War years. . . . While segregation in many public areas was not instituted until the 1890's, the churches did not wait that long; segregation was established in Protestantism by the end of Reconstruction. Indeed the evidence suggests that white southern Protestantism helped prepare the white South for the full capitulation to racism.

Racism triumphed in the South in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the northern churches condoned it. Though northern churches at first maintained integration in some phases of church life, compromises came in the 1870's, 1880's, and 1890's as the churches gave in to segregation in their southern schools and church administration. The pressure for northern capitulation—racism, imperialism, political bargains, economics, and desire to heal the wounds of the war—all left their marks on the churches. The tragedy of the northern white churches' surrender was that the voice of moral protest was silenced. . . . The whole race problem, in the eyes of both the northern and southern churches, became the problem of the personal defects of the Negro; hence, the solution became one directed toward Christian uplift of the Negro. A few churchmen still protested against this "solution," and the churches, especially in the North, did attack special problems such as lynching, but basically the churches agreed with American practices and attitudes.¹¹

Updating white Protestantism's role in race relations, Reimers points out that the church has followed rather than led the way:

In attacking segregation, Protestantism was in the mainstream of American life. It was no accident that the call for a "non-segregated church and a non-segregated society" came at about the same time as the threatened Negro march on Washington, Myrdal's *American Dilemma*, and President Truman's Commission on Civil Rights. . . . Full integration, in which all phases of church life were open to all without regard to race and in which Negroes served in nonracial capacities, was far from being achieved by 1965. In 1959, Liston Pope of the Yale Divinity School wrote of Protestantism, "Its record indicates clearly, however, that the church is the most segregated major institution in American society. It has lagged behind the Supreme Court as the conscience of the nation on questions of race, and it has fallen far behind trade unions, factories, schools, department stores, athletic gatherings, and most other areas of human association as far as the achievement of integration in its own life is concerned." Whether or not Pope's comment was entirely fair, the fact is that Protestantism has not been in the vanguard of integration.¹²

Both black and white churchmen in segregated congregations are unchristian to the extent that racial considerations take precedence over brotherly love and the golden rule. The blame for this sinful estate weighs more heavily on white shoulders than on black, because racial segregation has been forced upon Negro churches, having been instituted and perpetuated by white churches. Joseph H. Fichter, in his article, "American Religion and the Negro," printed in the book, *The Negro American*, boldly suggests that

if religious organizations were not segregated probably no other

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

form of American organization would be segregated, and there would be no need for a springboard like the Negro churches from which an attack could be mounted against other forms of institutional segregation and discrimination. It seems true to say that, on the American scene, racial integration is resisted most in groups where the membership is voluntary, where the organizational status is private (that is, non-governmental), and where the relationships are personal and primary. These characteristics are present, at least conceptually, in the typical religious congregation, which is deliberately exempted from anti-segregation legislation and from official public pressure.¹³

The church has "lagged behind." White religionists find this accusation annoying and often protest that it is unfair; Negro religionists consider the discomfort exhibited by whites, when so accused, as demonstrations of white *insincerity*. To put it in capsule form: blacks are reluctant to participate in white led church endeavors *because they do not trust white churchmen*. White churchmen come across as either racist, insensitive, unconcerned, or, at best, paternalistic in a negative and confining way, in the face of black aspirations for freedom, equality and justice. This backlog of trust violations cries out against any easy willingness on the part of blacks to risk further trust relationships with whites.

ROLE OF THE BLACK MINISTER

Before we outline in brief what we can do right to increase black participation in chapel programs, something must be said about the fluctuating role of the black minister in American history. Again, to some people's distress, let me quote from Washington's analysis. Listen for his concern for the black minister:

The genius of the Negro folk religion is not readily understood apart from the awareness of the black and white streams of which it is constituted. The white stream began with the missionaries who beat a path to the door of the Negro slave. Their main purpose was to extoll the virtues of the next world. From the earliest days, the Negro was much more concerned with the freedom of this world than with the religion of the next. He listened attentively to the religious and moral teachings of the whites, but his mind was elsewhere. He was resourceful enough to perceive that the best way to freedom in this world was through the religion of the whites, sanctioned by his masters and overseers as a means of harnessing his energy for production.

The black stream began under the camouflage of camp meetings during the day and singing at night, in which the religion of the whites and the concern of the slaves were blended to create the Negro spirituals which provided a cover for Negro preachers to lead insurrections and escapes. The fermentation of the folk religion began in the shadows of the plantation.

Inspired by the hope which accompanied the end of slavery, the Negro created out of his black religion a relief agency to aid the Freedman, centered in the congregation and the *preacher*. The hope of equal opportunity continued in the aftermath of Reconstruction,

¹³ Talcott Parsons and Kenneth B. Clark, eds. (Boston, 1965), pp. 411-412.

as well as the intention of the Negro that his religion of militancy and his minister serve him in the "advancement of the race."

This black stream of the Negro folk religion was given leadership by the free Negro ministers of the North, who had instituted Negro congregations independent of their white sponsors. This independent movement was a response to segregation in, and, later, exclusion from, white congregational communions. . . . This was assumed to be a temporary need and the folk anticipated the day when the preacher and the fellowship would bring about freedom and equality.

But the hope for the minister and the fellowship was not realized. Following Reconstruction the old practice of segregation was resumed with a vengeance in the South and discrimination continued in the North. These twin evils curbed the militancy of the folk religion. In that era of decline in the quest for freedom, the Negro minister remained the spokesman for the people, but with this difference: faced with insurmountable obstacles, he succumbed to the cajolery and bribery of the white power structure and became its foil. Instead of freedom, he preached moralities and emphasized rewards in the life beyond, in much the same manner as the white missionaries. The Negro minister increased his control and redirected the enthusiasm of the folk religion for the purpose of gaining personal power. . . . The burning zeal for liberty and justice, the *raison d'être* of the folk religion, was dimmed in the darkness of the whole society's disarrangement. . . .

The disappointment with the Negro minister and the independent fellowships became apparent early in this century with the loss of widespread support of Negro congregations and the rise of organizations such as the NAACP and the National Urban League. . . . Increasingly since the 1920's, the Negro minister has been an object of disgust. The deprecation of the Negro minister and his thwarting of black religion reached its height during the Depression. . . . Since the 1920's black religion has been dysfunctional . . . but all the while . . . seething. It came to a head with the nonviolent movement. Once again, some of the Negro ministers resumed their expected roles as leaders the race. With the protest movement black religion has come full circle and its vitality has never been more pronounced.¹⁴

In recent days the black minister has resumed the role of the original black ministers in America—that of race man and leader in the fight for justice and equality. But note that this is not the role usually considered proper to a pastor or priest in the mainstream of American thought about the church.

The Negro minister can be described with these attributes, either singly or in various combinations: race man, administrator, showman, entertainer, manipulator, foil of the establishment, pastor, ombudsman, educator and soul stirring preacher. He is rarely, if ever, called a theologian since his congregation is not usually interested in theology unless theology produces justice.

White ministers are typically described as pastors, theologians, administrators, and preachers. But in reality they, too, are race men who see their race as superior and, when dealing with blacks, think in terms of a proper "place" for them. The truth of the Gospel is maligned by both black and white ministers.

Insofar as black military chaplains are not primarily race men, they are seen by black troops as "cop-outs" from their primary

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 33-37.

calling. And the tendency in the military is to use black chaplains as "firemen" just as black ministers have been used by the power structure historically in America to keep blacks satisfied and in their place. Thus the dilemma.

It is not enough to describe what black ministers do to increase church participation among blacks, for the participation is more racial than Christian. And it is not sufficient to suggest that white chaplains continue in their ways and simply extend their missionary efforts to include blacks because whites' historical soft-pedaling of the Gospel's demand for brotherhood with its emphasis on equality and love of all, even the least, makes most such efforts suspect in the eyes of blacks.

WHAT THEN CAN WE DO?

The answer lies not in the area of skills and knowledge so much as it lies in the area of *attitude*. As with all men, blacks are less concerned with what the pattern of worship is than with the meaning and result of a congregation's worship.

A FEW REMINDERS

Remember that black congregations came into being because of the circumstances of black existence in America. The longer the circumstances continue, the more comfortable and secure the makeshift solutions became and the less trustworthy the people who created and maintained those circumstances. The problem for the black man now, with reference to integration and interracial participation, centers in trust and aspiration.

Remember that with the modern emphasis on racial pride and the formulations of black power and black beauty, if blacks are called to participate in integrated congregations, the work of pressing for freedom, equality and justice for blacks, must be shouldered by the congregation which invites them or else they become outcasts, "cop-outs" with other members of their race.

Remember that the church is first of all a fellowship of Christians and only secondarily an institution of society. A fellowship is constituted in love. An institution is constituted on the basis of its members meeting the membership requirements of the in group. The racial question has turned most church congregations in America into institutions rather than fellowships.

Remember that the invitation to any new people must show that the established group is interested in that which concerns these people and is working at a way of fulfilling their needs.

Understand that a person does not want to be continually invited into something as a representative of all blacks—a show-

piece—but rather as a person who is worthy on his own of full participation.

Remember that Christians are not called to be practical in the worldly sense. They are called to be faithfully obedient to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, practicality must take second place to love, mercy, and justice in working with all people.

Remember that Christian fellowship involves the risk of overthrowing socially accepted taboos against intimate interracial associations, and safeguards instituted against this possibility are barriers to genuine fellowship. Small, easily shut doors, are as bad as no doors at all.

Remember that segregated Christians are inherently unchristian even more than separate education is inherently unequal.

THINGS CHAPLAINS CAN DO

1. Clarify the objectives of congregational participation in general. What do we want to have happen?

a. Is our primary intent to have larger attendance at services of worship in order to meet statistical goals?

b. Do we want intimate Christian fellowship among people without regard for social/historical barriers that have separated them heretofore?

c. Do we want to provide entertainment to lull people into spiritual comfort?

d. Do we want to mobilize people for Christian involvement in the world?

With regard to black involvement, the following question must be answered: Are we attempting to maintain the *status quo* for chapel congregations as modified by pressures to include blacks in the same spatial environment, or do we intend to make chapel congregations creative, influential societies which challenge the secular world?

Clarifying objectives is very difficult because it calls for some realistic soul searching and perhaps some radical readjustments in goal orientation throughout the chaplaincy. It may be that our objectives have actually been statistical impressiveness, or the expansion of the commander's faith (or faithless) position, or ecclesiastical reflections of movements in secular society, rather than daring, radically loving, sacrificial examples of love among the people of God.

2. Read literature of the black mood and on black history in America to "feel into" the yearnings and frustrations of this people. Do this also for other minorities in our society.

3. Do not center your attention exclusively on blacks. Be concerned for churchd and unchurchd people of all races, including blacks. There is no advantage in being made part of an in group of a segregated organization. There must be freedom and equality for everybody; otherwise inclusion will be conceived of as being fad-dish and temporary until the next power surge.

4. Be honestly concerned for humanity—to discover and minister to human need—not in categories which distinguish an order of black needs which are qualitatively different from white needs, which are different from Indian needs, which are different from Puerto Rican needs, etc.

5. Accept the shame of racial segregation and work forthrightly to eliminate it.

6. Stand for freedom, equality and justice as *bona fide* and essential elements of the Christian Gospel and work to Christianize the congregation in this spirit, even if the denomination of which you are a part is not moving in this direction. Otherwise black participation will be temporary at best, for the problem with getting into an exclusive club is that once one enters he finds out what the club's problems and internal weaknesses are. It can be terribly frustrating to discover that the effort to enter was not worthwhile.

7. Welcome blacks as equals in Christ and in the world. Approach blacks positively, not with the attitude of what we can do for you, but what we can do together if you will join us. Tokenism and paternalism should be consciously rejected.

8. Use blacks symbolically—that is, more visibly—but not as entertainers. There should be no showcasing of black talent or applauding the rhythm of the black man as something “natural” to him. Understand that “soul” has to do with huamanity, not with food or blackness or music. It has to do with the depth of what is expressed, not simply with the person expressing it.

9. Include black idioms in the worship service, not as oddities, but as integral parts of the objectives and mood of worship. This may mean planning worship services more thoroughly and thematically, with worship objectives determined more specifically.

10. Demand more of blacks in the areas of theological insight, but eliminate the faulty notion that because of his blackness he is more sinful than the rest of sinful humanity.

11. Finally, be a leader rather than a follower. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Your salvation is a gift from God and your calling is to be an agent of reconciliation.

Several chaplains, noticing some signs of dissent when the Washington book was quoted, asked whether there was a difference of opinion as to Washington's scholarship. Chaplain DeVeaux stated that Washington is planning to write another book, since his position has shifted somewhat. "But to a large degree Washington expresses—in the sections I have quoted—what I see happening and I accept his phrasing as my understanding of the problem."

Dr. Mitchell expressed appreciation for the practical suggestions which Chaplain DeVeaux had made, but then stated emphatically, so that no one could misunderstand his position, "I don't see any necessary connection between Joe Washington's stuff and your practical suggestions. Washington's book is *so bad* in this particular point that he himself has privately repudiated his position and changed it in his next book.* He had *totally* misread and misunderstood black church history, and it would make me sick to think that black and white chaplains in general accepted his earlier gross misreading of the black church. I don't know of any black scholar who takes him seriously. Unfortunately all sorts of schools use his earlier book as a text in black religion. It completely caricatures black religion and I don't see why you base your good recommendations on all that bad data."

Chaplain DeVeaux, not to be undone, and not backing down from the position that Washington had something worthwhile to offer, asked Dr. Mitchell to "challenge the points so that I can talk with you."

Dr. Mitchell replied, "The caricature of the black preacher as showman of the program—who uses excessive emotionalism—was obviously written from a point of view outside black culture, and was written with complete rejection of his own people. This point of view is the 'Egypt' which I thought we had gotten out of."

"But it is an admission that we were in Egypt," said Chaplain DeVeaux, "and this is my concern."

"The Egypt I am referring to is not the Egypt of slavery, but the Egypt of misinterpreting black religion," Dr. Mitchell insisted.

In reply Chaplain DeVeaux countered, "I think it can be documented that there was a time when black preachers turned inward because of the general frustration of the black population with their inability to get anything accomplished."

Dr. Mitchell then went to a second point—the relation of the black man to theology. "Thank God we aren't theological, we aren't hung-up with German abstractions. Right now we need a

* See *The Politics of God*.

theology close to the people, instead of close to a few German theologians."

Chaplain DeVeaux agreed on the importance of social justice for the black man, but stressed that "this isn't the whole bag of Christianity. We need to go beyond survival."

At this point Father Rivers entered the discussion by stating, "I would take issue with the language you used in saying that a preacher's concern with black liberation was a race role rather than a religious role. This makes the preacher rather schizophrenic. The life of Moses, for example, was not divided up into religious and political spheres."

Chaplain Gilbert then came to the support of Chaplain DeVeaux, not by arguing the merits of the Washington book but by suggesting that the value of Chaplain DeVeaux's main thrust was unintentionally being missed. "I think the strong point in Chaplain DeVeaux's presentation is that some theological loss may have occurred. It might be worth discussing whether ideas of grace and sacrifice, for example, have been somewhat lost in black religion because of its necessary emphasis on freedom and survival."

Dr. Mitchell, however, stated that he felt "so strongly about Washington's book that I would hate to see the results of this conference propagate it. I want to make it very clear that I disassociate myself from it completely." He then reiterated the point that he had made earlier, namely, that he supported the practical suggestions of Chaplain DeVeaux.

Chaplain DeVeaux summed up in a nutshell what he was trying to say: "We should not attempt to use the black minister of the past as a guide to what black ministers ought to be like in the present. We need to make new and fresh beginnings which emphasize the totality of Christian understanding."

The dialogue was then directed to the practical subject of how to bring to the military chapel values and programs from the black religious community. Speakers were somewhat divided on the issue of whether chaplains ought to see blacks as human beings or as *black* human beings.

"We should not begin by saying that we need a place for blacks," stated Chaplain DeVeaux, "but by welcoming people on the basis of their *humanity* rather than their *blackness*. Then you may be able to build a fellowship."

"But from the black perspective in terms of *black* pride," asked Chaplain Edwards, "shouldn't we try to reach them as *black* human beings?"

The implied "Yes" in Chaplain Edwards' question was spelled out explicitly by Chaplain Shannon. "In order to reach blacks in

this point in our history, I think we should of necessity accept and give priority to blackness.”

In reply Chaplain DeVeaux stated, “Within the integrated fellowship, we must, of course, take up his concerns so that he is not made to feel that he is a cop-out to his community. Christian fellowship, however, should be moving beyond activity done on the basis of race.”

Dr. Mitchell then brought in the Biblical perspective: “I think you should deal functionally with people who come from various cultures. The Bible, for example, clearly recognizes various cultures. A single fellowship should be able to accept and minister to a variety of cultures. Gradually acculturation will occur. I pick up some whiteness, you pick up some blackness, etc.”

The question of how to integrate blacks into the service without being patronizing was then raised. “How can we be helpful, rather than patronizing?”

Chaplain DeVeaux answered the question by restating his position: “If you as a white chaplain attempt to recruit a black as a *black*, rather than as a *human being*, you will probably come across as patronizing. At the same time, I’m not suggesting that we attempt to overlook or eliminate his blackness.”

The session concluded with the following helpful observation by Dr. Mitchell: “One reason people patronize is that they feel threatened. They then overcompensate for their sense of inadequacy, guilt, etc. They have to start by dealing with their own racism; they need to overcome their own insecurity.”



BLACK YOUTH AND RELIGION

8

By Rev. James A. Thomas, Sr.

My presentation today will deal with the Christian religion and blacks in this country. It will be based primarily on my experiences and observations as a black person in religious work—primarily as a black pastor. It will also be based upon my reading of some of the most profound black thinkers of the past and the present.

A discussion of this topic is very difficult at this time in our history. It is difficult in the first place because traditional religion for many young blacks is a thing of the past. It is difficult in the second place because contemporary religion is going through many changes. Many people feel that it is declining altogether. Harvey Cox says that the collapse of traditional religion is one of the two major characteristics of our age, the other being urbanization.

There is, to be sure, a growing disenchantment among black youth with the organized church and religion, a disenchantment which can be seen in the large number of young drop-outs from the institutional church. This represents a radical change from the last forty to fifty years for blacks in general and for black youth in particular. For the most part, religion and the church were all that blacks had; society beyond their own black world was closed to them. They could not become members of the country clubs or other social organizations provided for their white peers; therefore, they joined the one institution they could join, namely, the black church. There they could do their own thing. They could assume positions of leadership and could feel important. During this same period, anyone observing blacks in this country, young and old, could not have helped concluding that they were religious, dedicated, and faithful.

It would be good at this point to say something about how and why blacks in this country became Christians. According to some black historians, many white plantation owners did not believe that blacks had souls. Consequently blacks did not need religion. This belief was conveniently discarded when it was conceived that Christianity could be used to keep blacks enslaved. Blacks were consistently taught those virtues of Christianity that would keep them in check and prevent them from rebelling against their own-

ers. They were taught to be meek and longsuffering. The emphasis was placed on eschatology, on the pie-in-the-sky theology, while others were having their pie here on earth. Whites must be given credit, for they did a wonderful job evangelizing black folk. Malcolm X says in his autobiography that the evangelizing of blacks in this country by Christian whites has been one of the greatest contributions of western Christianity. He says that, had this not been true, blacks would have risen up against their oppressors long ago and would probably have been exterminated. The clear-cut choice of that great American, Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death," would have been a clear-cut choice for blacks. The "death" part of the slogan became true for many blacks. Among those were Chrispus Attucks, Denmark Vesey, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Blacks traditionally loved religion. They loved their Jesus. They walked with him daily. He was the source that sustained them and gave them hope in a world of despair. They enjoyed their religion. It was a highly emotional experience which satisfied real needs. However, we are now living in a new day. A few years ago black youth began to grow up and think; they discovered inconsistencies in what whites and many of their own black leaders had taught them. Many young blacks rejected the faith of their fathers—as it was presented to them. In addition, the more radical and militant black youth divorced themselves from institutionalized Christianity, feeling that it was just another trick of the white man to keep them enslaved. I say Christianity, because in talking with a large number of black youth, I have discovered that there is on their part a real commitment to Jesus the Christ and his way of life as they now interpret it. They see Jesus as an activist, as an advocate of social change and as a reformer of social, political, and religious institutions. To them he was "a way out cat" in his day. And they are identifying with him in this light.

This is a good indication on the one hand that Christianity is far from being rejected, but on the other hand that there is something wrong with our presentation of it. I am in agreement with Gerald C. Braur of Chicago Divinity School, who recently said that all men are basically religious—when they cannot find satisfaction in one religion, they turn to another. This is precisely what many black youths have done in embracing the Black Muslim religion, a version of the religion of the Middle East. But fortunately, many of these same black youth have discovered that the Black Muslim religion is, for the most part, the other extreme. Consequently, they go on searching and seeking after that which is meaningful and fulfilling and relevant. This I think is good and healthy, not only for these seeking young people, but for society as

well. It should be pointed out, however, that there are still many young blacks in this country who are "in the bag" of the traditional religion. They generally live in rural areas where contact with religious thinkers and institutions of higher learning is either limited or not available at all. They are involved in a church system which teaches that everything is wrong except going to church. They are taught to live with hell every day and to look for heaven some other day in the sky. These are the ones that I feel are still being tricked. They live daily in a religious straight jacket. This certainly is no criticism of any brother or sister anywhere. I am just putting the cards on the table so that we can look at them. These are the ones that I call the silent majority in the church. They are there carrying on in a manner in which they are convinced is right. These black youth are religious in their own way.

There is another group of black young people today who also are religious. This group, however, consists of persons who have had a great deal of contact with religious thinkers and institutions of higher learning and have been privileged to have had some new light placed on some old matters. These are your Jesse Jacksons, Andrew Youngs, and Oliver Browns. Their interpretation of Christianity is explained in some of the writings of the young black author, James H. Cone. These young blacks see Christianity as a seven-day-a-week proposition, as over against the Sunday-only concept. These are the young liberators who themselves have discovered the truth of what Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." They are out trying to set their brothers and sisters free. They are religious in every sense of the word.

RELIGION AS A GUIDE

For the remaining part of this presentation, I want to focus on the significance of religion in the lives of black youth. In the first place, religion is a guide to many young blacks. Herein lies the hope of the faith and possibly the hope of the world. It is a comfort to me to know that everyone is not doing his own thing; everyone has not succumbed to situation ethics. Religion provides the yardstick for the conduct of many young blacks. It instills within them a vital set of principles too meaningful to them to violate. As a guide, it provides coolness when the pressure is heated to get them to conform to what the crowd is doing. This is often illustrated by Christian demonstrators who refrain from violence when violence is all around them.

Religion also guides many young blacks in the area of decision making. And in this day and time, this is no small task. There are

many decisions to be made daily. When we awake in the morning, we are confronted with the decision whether or not we will get up immediately or remain in bed for awhile. Throughout the day, we continually make decisions. This is a picture of life. For many young blacks there are decisions to be made around some moral issue. It may be sex, war, or drugs. It may be a number of other things. It is often all of these. Whatever may be the case, many black youths rely upon religious convictions in making their decisions. This is done in accordance with what youth feel is God's will for their lives.

RELIGION AS SOCIAL ACTION

In the second place, religion is significant to many blacks because it is constantly developing; it is not a stagnant force in the world. This conception of religion leads them to seek new and better ways to practice it, especially by placing a greater emphasis upon social action. And it is out of a deep and abiding religious concern that black and white youth alike participate in civil rights demonstrations, voter's registrations, sit-ins, wade-ins, and other means of registering their concern against the non-religious injustices which exist in any form. Religion is a great motivating factor in the lives of these young people; for many it is the only motivating factor. Religion makes many blacks feel dissatisfied with the status quo and sends them out to do something to change it, if possible, in a constructive way. Unlike their forefathers, today's black youth are not spending previous moments in dreaming about some pie in the sky; they are indeed a part of the NOW generation. They not only want to see the American dream become a reality, but also the kingdom of brotherhood about which Jesus the Christ spoke.

It is again their religion which makes many black youths deeply concerned about disease, hunger, poverty and racism. Because of these concerns, many are led into the medical profession. A few are led into the ministry. And still others are led into various professions offering help to the poor, the down-trodden and helpless. We ought to be grateful to God for these religious young people because they have every reason in the world "not to give a damn about nothing."

RELIGION AS SELF-AWARENESS

In the third place, religion played a significant role in leading blacks into an awareness of themselves. This awareness of blackness and acceptance of black as being beautiful came as a result of the outcries of Black Power. This phrase put more fear into

black and white Americans than any other phrase I know, and was often misunderstood and misinterpreted. To associate it with religion was, for many, to equate it with heresy. But black religion and the cries for black power complement each other for the good of black people. James H. Cone, in his book *Black Theology and Black Power*, says that black power is Christ's central message to twentieth century America. It is the message of the black man becoming aware of himself with pride as a human being. I think that his awareness is very beneficial; the whole country can now begin to make progress.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ summarized the second half of the ten commandments by saying, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." It is impossible to obey this command if one does not love himself. An essential aspect of love is acceptance, and lack of self-acceptance was for so many years the hang-up of black youth. One need only to look, for example, at the success of many companies that sold hair straightening grease, wigs and bleaching creams. Black youth were attempting to deny or to negate their Negritude, to be someone they could never be. Religion has now liberated them. They understand that they must accept themselves for what and who they are. Otherwise they cannot relate meaningfully to others. Religion has thus led black youth into the truth about themselves and has provided them with the grace to accept themselves. Now they can go on to make contributions to society. They definitely have a part to play in the total scene of things and their religion is going to play an even greater role in aiding them in the accomplishment of this.

BLACK YOUTH AND THE MILITARY

Something must also be said about black youth and the military. Formerly, black youth readily volunteered for the Army. To a large extent they did so out of dire economic necessity. Now, more are drafted than volunteer. The result is that many of these young men go into the service angry, angry because they are being asked to place their lives on the line for a society that has committed many atrocities against them. They are angry because they feel that when the battle is over and they return home with one eye or one arm, society will continue to commit atrocities against them. They are also angry because they have been told that blacks are placed on the hottest battlefronts and that this is one of the quickest ways of eliminating them. There is considerable discontentment among black GIs already in the service, according to letters from servicemen which are published in some of our leading black magazines. Only time will tell what effect this discontentment will have on them as far as the Army is concerned.

Ministering to blacks today, whether they are in the service or out, is no small task. One has to be aware of and try to understand the black youth's struggle for liberation in every aspect of society. The black chaplain can do well to assist in this struggle for black liberation in the military.

As far as an all volunteer Army is concerned I am seriously afraid that if things do not change for the better to any appreciable degree, there are not going to be many blacks volunteering. This I think is quite understandable.

I also believe that the youth of today, both black and white, with their discontentment and their restless spirits, are being used by God to speak to us. They are challenging us to grow up, to discard our old antiquated and cherished ideas, rules, and practices and to get on with the business of becoming truly human.

DISCUSSION COMMENTS

The discussion began with a question of definition: "Is your definition of religion so broad that it is a definition of life?"

Pastor Thomas replied by saying that religion must be defined "more broadly than church rituals; it must include involvement—participation with people."

Dr. Mitchell looked at the question from a historical point of view. "In African and American black culture, *everything* has religious connotation. It is interesting to note in connection with some of our best known black militants that the religion they proclaim as being the white man's tool is in fact the very thing they resort to when they deal with groups. This is not difficult to understand when you realize that everyone from Jimmie Baldwin to Martin Luther King to Jim Farmer, Hughie Newton, Ron Karenga and Malcolm X are all preachers' kids and all but Farmer are Baptist preachers' kids. They got their tools in the Baptist church. They got their whole approach to life out of this ethos and to a very large extent they are still extremely religious."

Questioning whether these people can all be called religious, Chaplain Wright asked, "Is their motivation basically *religious*? Some activists disavow religion and religious values, even though they do some of the things religious people do."

In reply Chaplain Tumpkin stated, "They are saying 'No' to Christianity as we traditionally know it and 'Yes' to Christ, to his religious principles."

Moving on to a different subject, Dr. Mitchell commented about the way black religion developed in America. "When we talk about black religion in America we are talking about something which at first was African. English religious labels, i.e., Christian labels, were placed on the African religious traditions—which were quite

compatible with Christianity and which helped to broaden our understanding of Christianity. Malcolm X, incidentally, has misread history. To say that religion was foisted on us is less than half the story. In fact, slaves often converted their masters, the best example being Richard Allen, head of the AME church. We have to get rid of the rhetoric spread by some militants which says that blacks have been duped, forced to accept Christianity by whites who wanted to control blacks. From the beginning, the black church opposed slavery as much as it could within the limits of a closed system."

The discussion then turned to the subject of black involvement and activism. "I've heard a lot about the activism of blacks," Chaplain Swager stated, "but I see them withdrawing, copping out of this kind of involvement, so that we are in the sorry position of having more black LTC's than LT's in the army. If we are going to be great social activists, we can't withdraw. We need to be involved in the system to change it for good."

The session ended on a note of optimism and hope in the reply by Chaplain Shannon: "I don't think blacks are copping out. A black college graduate a couple decades ago had few opportunities, one of which was the Army. Today he has many other live options, including industry. Just because blacks are not entering the Army doesn't mean they are withdrawing or copping out."



BLACK WORSHIP

By Father Clarence Jos. Rivers

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

Being an extremely rare bird, a black Roman Catholic priest, I am frequently asked, "Why aren't there more black Catholics?" There are obviously many reasons; but the most significant one is that the average black person, though attracted by our elaborate ceremonies, nonetheless finds the total atmosphere of our worship "too cold," "without feeling." He would find the same fault with mainstream white Protestant worship. For although the form and structure of black Protestant worship has not in 200 years differed greatly from that of white Protestant worship, distinguishing features do nonetheless exist apart from form and structure. Among these are a lack of Puritanism and a difference of perspective.

A LACK OF PURITANISM

The lack of "warmth" and "feeling" that blacks have sensed in white churches, far from being imaginary, is a deliberately imposed ideal of a Puritan (or Jansenistic) culture. Puritan indoctrination leads the average churchgoer to believe that his ideal is to become "angelic," to be above human emotions, especially pleasurable ones. Puritanism discourages "warmth" and "feeling" and "enjoyment."

A common saying, for example, that describes intense pleasure goes as follows: "I enjoyed that so much it was a sin." You see, pleasure is sin! I remember hearing a priest correcting a young lady for saying that she enjoyed Mass. "We don't go to church to be entertained, do we?" I always reply by pointing out that the opposite of entertainment is boredom. Do we go to church to be bored? Of course not. But Puritan indoctrination has taught us that only the painful is really beneficial. In a television dog food commercial, a dog is pictured greedily gulping down some rare vintage dog food. A mother explains to her son how good this delicacy is for the dog, to which the little boy responds, "If it's so good for him, why does he like it so much?" You see the little boy has already learned the first teaching of Puritanism, namely, that only the painful and difficult are really beneficial.

Because Afro-Americans have been isolated so much from mainstream social and cultural influences, and because they have not been predominantly of the middle class, they have been less influenced by the disease of Puritanism than their white brothers. In worship this has been manifested in several ways. The emotional, for instance, has not been considered the opposite of the spiritual. Quite to the contrary, a preacher who failed to move his congregation "did not have the *Spirit* with him"; a singer who performed without feeling "lacked soul." In the original Biblical concept of the spiritual, the spirit or soul is the life principle, the source of life and liveliness, of dynamism and movement, of motion and emotion. That which is unmoved and unmoving is not spiritual; it is dead. To be spiritual is to be alive, to be capable of movement and of responding to movement. It should be clearly understood, however, that there is no separation between either the spiritual or the intellectual and the emotional. Make no mistake, a congregation will not suffer long sermons "that say nothing," sermons without intellectual content. But intellectual content must always be informed by soul, by a spirit that has the power to move and to evoke movement, i.e., emotion. Not fearing the emotional, blacks have not feared highly rhythmic music, or the tendency to improvise musically. As a result, the black American churches have been one of the richest sources of popular music that we know. They have developed many styles in addition to the traditional styles of Protestantism. Consequently, the black man will unconsciously expect a greater variety of styles than is normally available in the average white church; he is likely to be bored by the relative monotony of the music in such churches.

Just as the lack of Puritan restraints in black churches has allowed for much musical improvisation and creativity, so also it has allowed for greater spontaneity elsewhere. The black congregation is not a passive, silent, nonparticipating congregation. It participates by responding with its own interjections and acclamations, with expressions of approval and encouragement—when the soloist and choir sing, when the scripture is read and when the sermon is preached.

Doesn't this lead to disorder? No. It is "ritualized." The people have a sense of when and how to respond in ways that would no more disrupt a church performance than applause would interrupt a politician's speech or laughter a comedian's monologue. On the contrary, the deadly silence of an unresponsive congregation is the feared, disabling enemy.

A related area of spontaneity is the lack of rubrical rigidity. Even in updated and reformed Roman Catholic law concerning worship, there is an insistence that a priest may not make the

slightest change in the service that is not sanctioned by law. And this kind of nonsense begets arguments over whether the "Amen" at the end of the Canon can be sung more than once, since only one is indicated in the official books. A black preacher, however, may ask a congregation to repeat a whole song either because it was done exceptionally well (and they would want to savor it) or because it was not done well enough (and the song had not yet achieved its purpose).

A final area of difference is in the manner of preaching styles. A lack of Puritan restraint has allowed a dramatic, dynamic, even flamboyant style to be incorporated in the worship service, a style which is most effective when it is rich in word play and poetry, and when it is delivered with a sense of rhythm and music. Because we have a special preaching consultant, Dr. Mitchell, it would be superfluous for me to comment any further on preaching except to say that preaching in the black Catholic Mass is central to the worship experience, as it is in the Protestant tradition generally.

A DIFFERENCE OF PERSPECTIVE

When the American slaveholder encouraged Christianity among his slaves, believing that this would help keep them "pacified," he mistakenly believed that his slaves would interpret the Gospels in exactly the same way that he did. Quite to the contrary, black men have always had their own, perhaps unconscious, understanding of the Scriptures, even when, superficially, they pretended, for the sake of survival, to understand things only in the way that their masters approved. A humorous poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar points to this two-faced survival technique. In the poem the preacher insists that he is not preaching discontent but Bible history. He also insists that God's truth doesn't change. If it was true then, it's true now! And so we have always had a black perspective, a black theology.

The concept of "salvation," for example, has never had a purely other worldly meaning. To an enslaved people, deliverance was a necessity in this world. The slaves saw themselves as "the children of Israel," suffering under the yoke of oppression in Egypt. And when they sang, "Go down Moses, Tell old Pharo to let my people go," Pharo was not some far off historical figure. Nor was their hope of deliverance only for some pie-in-the-sky, for they also sang:

I'll tell you fellow members
Things happen mighty strange
But the Lord was good to Israel
And has ways don't ever change.

Even today in the renaissance of black theology, the theme of liberation is central. At present when many white congregations are expressing the wish that their pastors would stay away from political and social concerns and stick to the Gospel, it is very unlikely that very many black congregations would conceive of the Gospel apart from social concerns. It would not occur to black congregations to think that Martin Luther King had stepped out of his role as preacher when he became socially involved. As in the prophetic tradition of the Old and New Testaments, acts of worship divorced from lives of social concern are an abomination in the sight of God:

The blood of your sacrifices disgusts me
And the smell of your incense sickens me.
I am tired of that jangling noise that
you call singing—
But when you have turned yourselves toward
righteous living,
When you have decided to help the oppressed,
And to be generous to the orphan
And to take the part of defenseless widows,
Then come to me
And though your sins be as scarlet
They shall be made as white as snow.

(Isaiah 1)

Take the case, my brothers, of someone who has never done a single good deed but claims that he has faith. Will that faith save him? If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, 'I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty,' without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? Faith is like that: if good works do not go with it, It is quite dead. This is the way to talk to people of that kind: 'You say that you have faith and I have good deeds; I will prove to you that I have faith by showing you my good deeds—now you prove to me that you have faith without any good deeds to show.'

(James 2: 14-18)

If a man who was rich enough in this world's goods
Saw that one of his brothers was in need,
But closed his heart to him,
How could the love of God be living in him?
My children, our love is not to be
Just words or mere talk,
But something real and active.

(1 John 3: 17-18)

If you come to the altar and there remember that something separates you from your brother, go first and be reconciled to your brother and then return to the altar.

(Matthew 5: 23-24)

THE PRINCIPLE OF CATHOLICITY

The note of catholicity, i.e., of universality, of openness to all men of all cultures, seems to be an attribute of most religions—in theory. In practice most religions become so identified with particular cultures that it is frequently difficult to distinguish basic religious principles from their particular cultural expressions. For example, the average religious person thinks that there is a "reli-

gious music" as opposed to "secular music." And even after it has been factually demonstrated that the music that he thinks of as religious actually had its origin in Ale houses, dance halls, and the courts of the Renaissance princes, he still finds it difficult to accept contemporary religious music which comes from so-called secular sources. In other words he has identified religion with very particular cultural expressions.

Now, however, the attempt must be made to enlarge the scope of such a man both because practical circumstances and religious principle (the obligation of catholicity) require it. Practical circumstances require it because there is no possibility for separate but equal facilities for every cultural inclination to be found in the average congregation. Religious principle demands it clearly in the injunction, "Preach the Gospel to every nation"; to be catholic is thus a principle which no Christian church can legitimately deny. (If you tend to think of catholicity as particularly Christian, I would remind you that our origins were Jewish, and that long before there was a Christian, there was a Jewish aspiration toward catholicity: "My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations".)

The social pressures now exerted upon the military chaplain to make the worship of his congregation more catholic brings religious ideal and practical necessity together. Indeed, the congregation that fails to demonstrate its openness to all cultures says in fact that it is not open to all men. A congregation's invitation to "outsiders" must be considered contradictory, if implied in that invitation is the proviso that the invited guest must leave half of himself, namely his culture, at the church door.

SOME PRINCIPLES FOR ADAPTATION

Both in accordance with the principle of catholicity and in accordance with the practical military circumstances, no particular style ought to be considered *the* religious style of the worshipping congregation. Instead a variety of styles ought to be available on equal footing for the congregation.

No attempt should be made to create a "black" service, distinct from other services; such an effort would likely produce a caricature of a black religious experience rather than authentic black expression. Whites would not take it seriously, but would tend to treat it as a diversion. (This danger, namely, that Puritanical persons would treat enjoyable black expressions as less than serious, will always be present, but the danger may be minimized if the enjoyable expression is given in a context which such persons are likely to take seriously. For example, when recording some of my music with a Jazz accompaniment, I have found it helpful to

introduce each piece with a commentary that sets a serious tone for each piece.) Blacks would be turned off if the service did not have the quality of authenticity. They would be deeply offended if they sensed that whites did not take black religious expressions seriously.

Chaplains and all who assist in the formulation of the service should become familiar with the elements of the black religious experience. This could be possible through live involvement, or through the media of recordings, films, and video tapes.

It might be possible for the military to put together an educational package of films and recordings that would give chaplains and their co-workers a taste of the black church experience. For neophytes, this might be better than the live experience, since nonessential elements might tend to obscure the essential ones in the imperfect live experience. Another possibility is workshop sessions where chaplains might participate in the elements of the live experience under the guidance of experts.

When introducing the congregation to elements of the black religious experience, the chaplain should do so without apology and do it well; amateurish imitations would produce the kind of caricature that I mentioned above.

Would it not be possible for the military to put together one or more traveling worship teams who could help chaplains and their congregations learn the skills, get the feel of, Afro-American worship? Chaplains could invite black preachers to preside on frequent occasions. A list should be made of the best ones throughout the country. Perhaps they might even be presented occasionally by recording. Black choirs could be invited not only to perform but to work together with chapel choirs. Chaplains could employ the services of organizations like the National Office for Black Catholics, which is trying to set up facilities to assist in making churches relevant to the needs of black people (and indirectly to the needs of all people).

In making military chapel worship services relevant to the needs of black people, chaplains will indeed make them more relevant to the needs of all people. For all of us who have been shackled by the chains of Puritanism, long, at least unconsciously, to be free; we wish to be allowed to act as human beings and not forced to act as someone has imagined that angels must act.

For the past couple of years I have been traveling around the country with a program entitled, "Soul: An Antidote for Puritanism." Our message has been received the most enthusiastically by middle-aged, middle-class whites who have been longing to be told that it's all right to be human, that it's all right to unfetter their souls. I believe that it is possible for Afro-Americans to help "save

the souls of America" in the very deepest sense of that phrase. The military chaplain, by understanding the Afro-American worship experience, can make a significant contribution in leading the way.

DISCUSSION COMMENTS

Recognizing that church music in many black congregations is different from the music of most white congregations, Chaplain Everett asked, "Can black church music be effectively integrated into the chapel service?"

"In the first place," Father Rivers replied, "a service should be well constructed liturgically so that it *demand*s singing. In the second place, the chaplain needs to develop cultural skills—by divesting himself of Puritan inhibitions and by getting into the "black bag." Then black music can be integrated into the service in a natural, easy way. If it's not done well, it will just be superimposed unnaturally and it will lack authenticity."

Chaplain Shannon then raised a theological problem which has very practical consequences. "The doctrine of man, as it is held by many people, causes a problem here. When some people believe in a gradation of races and denominations they also believe in a gradation of music—black music (and preaching) being inferior. People who put blacks in another ball park will have difficulty accepting a fully integrated service."

After several chaplains illustrated this point, Father Rivers stated, "Yes, along this line, I once had a lady tell me that she liked my music, but that it didn't have any place in church. We must remember that the church also has an obligation to catholicity. If my bishop were to say that certain music is unworthy of the dignity of the church, I would point out that the church has an obligation to be open to all people and cultures. Part of loving all men is to accept their music within a worship service."

Although barriers and difficulties may never be fully removed, Chaplain Gilbert suggested one means of partially overcoming them. "I think one thing that is necessary here is support by *supervisory chaplains*. We should say to congregations and commanders, 'This chaplain has a special light; he can give us something of great richness. Let's enjoy it.' "

Another helpful suggestion for breaking down barriers and overcoming difficulties was given by Dr. Mitchell. "I'd like to approach this from another angle. One way to open up white middle class people is to say, 'Your kids dig it. Now you can put this culture down if you want to, but you do so at the peril of widening the gap between yourself and your children.' "

In bringing black religious values into the chapel service, one

must understand that these values are not being introduced into a cultural vacuum. "I would like to hear something," said Chaplain Gilbert, "about the fact that the military has a certain kind of upper middle class officer-style culture, which has some value to us. For example, there is an understanding of what fairly good music is, what worship is, and what a good sermon is. I would like to hear if this culture is worth defending at all, or do we have to go to a completely new culture?"

The session closed with the following response from Dr. Mitchell: "We shouldn't throw it out. You can't create culture on the spot. Every culture has values or it wouldn't survive. The key word is *acculturation*—take people where they are and move them slowly. The best elements of various cultures should be brought together."

THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY WITH YOUNG ADULTS: BLACK AND WHITE

By Chaplain Sylvester L. Shannon

YOUNG ADULT GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS

The most profound change in young adult life during the past decade has been the emergence of a new group consciousness. One widely quoted observer has said that this is the first generation which is not sure that it has a future. Indications are that this kind of awareness will soon touch most young adults. The common bond which this consciousness has already created among diverse groups of younger Americans has resulted in a "generation gap" of unprecedented scope and seriousness. The expressions of response to such awareness are multifaceted and broadly cultural: a shift of values concerning education, work and family, as well as new life styles, political actions and art forms. Together these responses have been called "The Movement."

The implications of this new group consciousness for the church's ministry with young adults, both black and white, are also profound. I say *with* young adults rather than *to* young adults because this wording places the ministry in a *dynamic context*: dialogue and action are already underway in young adult culture. It is clearly not appropriate to relate to young adults only as isolated individuals or with an intent to "get something started" among lonely and uncommitted servicemen. Nor can we assume that moral and theological issues are not already being raised by a great many young adults. The chaplain's ministry with young adults should be a two-way street; only in a dialogue of action and reflection will the goal of reconciliation be attainable.

Another way of stating this is to say that The Seven Last Words of The Church cannot be "We Never Did It That Way Before." The spirit of this article is "ministry through coalition." This implies that the church (or chapel programs) should first of all be committed to self-determination by young adults as to the style and context of ministry with them. The church's proclamation of the Gospel gains credibility only as the church affirms the equal responsibility of young adults and the validity of their life styles and culture. Coalition also implies the possibility—and often the necessity—of ministry through non-church agencies. The

uniqueness and relevance of faith must be demonstrated through joint action in which the church, secular structures, and young adults participate in a relationship of dignity, equal responsibility and mutual need.

It must be assumed that the chaplaincy has no deep and broad reservoir of success on which to build and expand its ministry with young adults. "Successes" have frequently involved charismatic and paternalistic leadership and have faded quickly. Furthermore, ministry with young adults has often been premised on two false assumptions: First, that church-related young adults are representative of young adults in the population as a whole. And second, that those young adults whose only contact with the church is pastoral services will automatically drift into the church when they "settle down." I do not believe they will.

Nevertheless, the church has a great resource that is extremely valuable for its ministry. In both its history and its present life it has a strong kinship with the hopes and commitments of a significant number of young adults deeply involved in moral, social and theological issues. It may be difficult for clergymen and congregations to break some habits of paternalism or to accept the challenge of committed young adults. But the chapel program has the opportunity to synchronize its motion with many persons who are actively concerned for the reconciliation of men and society. Reconciliation with the young may be as much a matter of the church's coming to grips with contemporary theological rediscovery in its own life as it is a matter of responding to the life styles and values of the new generation. For example: Among young adults, the *hope of community* is an unmistakably strong theme, asserting men's ability to care for each other and for their environment, and demonstrating that care in experimental societies. In the church, contemporary "theologies of hope" express a similar vision of stewardship and community. Young adults have already found or created forms of the church which can engage in relevant dialogue about the political/social/cultural community they seek to build—one evidence of the affinity between theological discovery, rediscovery, and cultural revolution. Another young adult theme is *honesty*, reflected in a candor that both demands and affirms authentic personhood and true human identity. Contemporary studies of the personhood and identity of Christ make the same affirmation. *Joy and celebration* are yet another symbol of young adult culture, and its counterpart can be found in modern interpretations of the Incarnation and in "celebrational" theologies. Both contemporary young adult culture and contemporary theology are sharply critical of the Puritan standard of "justifica-

tion by work," and both express an appreciation for the gift of life.

RACISM AND EXCLUSIVENESS

One of the most important priorities with which the church must come to grips is that of racism and exclusiveness. Young adults see this issue rather clearly and they see that the church is part of the problem rather than part of the solution. There was a time in the life of American churches when black people were not welcome to participate and worship with white people. In reality, this is not far from true for the majority of local parishes and congregations today. Hence, we must acknowledge that "institutional racism has been historically and is currently a fact in our society," and the church is a part of this.¹

In this contemporary setting, young adults admit that part of their difficulty in responding to the church is the unwillingness of the church to stand over against the culture and deal prophetically with its own racism.

It is not enough for the church to plan a strategy of dealing with integration. A theology must be developed to eliminate racism. Central to this task of elimination is the need to accurately identify the problem, namely, *white racism*. Most white Americans were introduced to the term "white racism" by the *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*.² Most black Americans found it prudent and lifesaving to "know" this ugly sickness from pre-school age. That report, popularly known as the Kerner Report, stated: "What white Americans have never fully understood—but what the Negro can never forget—is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it."³

I think Stokely Carmichael was on the money when he suggested that if the white man wanted to help eliminate racism, he could go home and free his own people. For years now white people have been told that minority groups in our nation are suffering from injustice and poverty. Americans have been confronted with these facts from all sides—and with verbal and physical force. Unless a person has become totally blind, he is aware that the phrases "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"

¹ *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968), p. 144f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 382. Cf. "Far too often, the (white) press acts and talks about Negroes as if Negroes do not read the newspapers or watch television, give birth, marry, die, and go to PTA meetings," p. 383.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

and "government of the people, by the people, for the people" do not *really* or *actually* include those people who are red, yellow, brown, and black.

The problem of racism in America must be recognized for what it is. Put plainly, black people do not trust white people. And why should they? I do not mean to bore or anger you with the recapitulation of history which proves the fact that white people have murdered and continue to murder black people. Let me give you some spot announcements which will bring the past into focus: Medger Evers. Emmitt Till. Martin Luther King, Jr. Colonel Young. The Scotsboro Boys, Brownsville, Texas. The Ninth Cavalry.

If the great American tragedy is racism and exclusiveness, and if this ailment has received the blessing of the church, then the church must now write a new theology, or lose its opportunity to minister with young adults. Just as the church was able to construct a theology justifying slavery and oppression, now she must also make a theological clarion call in the urgent task of eliminating racism. The mass media and blind white people fell all over themselves denying the heart of the Kerner Commission Report, namely, that America is a white-power, white-racist society. The intelligent and compassionate—the Christian—response should have been admission (facing the reality) and repentance (resolving upon action adequate to heal the disease). Can education heal white racism? No. It can confirm an existing goodwill, change to some degree the remaining elements of racism in the psyche, and teach skills and processes toward effective action for racial justice. But behavior patterns do not change until attitudes change, and attitudes change only with new involvements. Education, as a means of curing racist blindness, must include role action and on-the-scene action.

This is why I am so shocked when people do not recognize that the military cannot be other than a reflection of the larger culture. Senior noncommissioned officers and field grade officers are simply in a different generational ball park than young enlisted men and junior officers. In order to bring them all together, as well as to deal effectively with black social expectations, we should begin sensitivity training for forgotten noncoms (E6 to E9) and hard-nosed company commanders. The chaplain, more than any other military team member, must involve these persons in understanding that it is OK to be oneself. If one is not free to be oneself, to know how one feels, he can never communicate with the young adults who are making real progress in understanding themselves.

What is facing chaplains and commanders, black and white, is whether out of the current situation of white racism and black

revolution we can build a new and better community. This community should be one in which human value is of ultimate worth, rather than the accident of one's birth. American children have been taught, carefully taught, to be bigots and racists. If the Gospel that we proclaim in the name of our Lord is not sufficient to bring black and white—as well as red, brown, and yellow—together in a new sense of *koinonia* and oneness, then it is an empty Gospel.

Black is beautiful because it is God's creation, not because it is black. White is beautiful because it, too, is God's creation, and not because it is white. We are now faced with the challenge: Is the Gospel of our Lord able to break down the barriers which have so long separated us and bring us into a new community? Or will the sense of racism, injustice and exploitation continue to divide us?

God's will in this matter has been expressed in the person of our Lord; he now awaits our response.

SUGGESTED STYLES

The following statements, therefore, are directed to those who are concerned about social action which meets the needs of the entire chapel community. Three styles of young adult participation are suggested:

1. Traditional Church Involvement

The percentage of 18 to 30 year olds working in responsible positions on boards, vestries, and sessions, across the country is infinitesimally small. The time is ripe for these groups to open up opportunities for young adults—churched and unchurched—to speak out, organize, and become ecclesiastically political. This may mean encouraging those who would say, "I'd rather be innovative, militant, freewheeling, etc." to join in a coffeehouse kind of expression or to organize an adoption program for "poor families" in the surrounding community. It should be understood that the Army—except in rare cases of commanders who possess wisdom—like local churches, is not likely to respond to the creative energies of young adults until young adults demand to be seen, heard and understood.

2. Independent Witness

Young adults, both black and white, may decide to stay out of church organizations altogether. If they do, they may want to set up some machinery for being the church as they perceive it ought to be. Perhaps a spontaneous organization concerned about the welfare of Christian young adults can come into being: free to help the church be the church, attacking it when necessary, supporting it when it takes risks, engaging in a ministry of conflict resolution and dialogue.

3. The Chaplain as a Pilgrim Person

The psychiatrist R. D. Laing captured the spirit of what building a good society is when he stated that it is not primarily a social, but a psychic task. What makes the youthful disaffiliation of our time a cultural phenomenon, rather than merely a political movement, is the fact that it strikes beyond ideology to the level of consciousness, seeking to transform our deepest sense of the self, the other, and the environment. The military leader, and more especially the chaplain, should understand the spirit of the young adult who will risk separation from what is not honest to him. Our mission, and our frequent movements, should remind us of the Biblical concept that we are pilgrim people. As chaplains, we ought to be people who travel not only in a geographic sense, but also in a psychic sense. We ought to be able to move easily from the chapel community into the various cultural sub-groups which are emerging within the military establishment—to become involved in a ministry *with*, rather than merely *to*, young adults.

DISCUSSION COMMENTS

The discussion opened with a question from Chaplain Nagata about how to use sensitivity training in the military. Chaplain Shannon answered, "The U. of Colorado, N.Y.U., and the National Training Laboratory, among others, have excellent courses which could help chaplains to understand their feelings and to articulate these feelings in a useful way. This applies in particular to the area of race relations. Many others in the military could also use the courses they offer."

Then the discussion centered on who in particular needs the training. "I'm concerned," said Dr. Mitchell, who had been in the Army many years ago, "with top brass and middle management—that they get this training."

"The top management is not really the problem," replied Chaplain Siege. "They are open to all sorts of new ideas and answers. Our problem is at the middle and lower management level—at, say, the level where the PFC gets hooked in with the E7, who lacks sensitivity to people's feelings."

Chaplain McCullough then said that "the problem isn't just with management—it exists mainly on a white troop level where there are tremendous frustrations also."

"The key place to attack the problem, however," replied Chaplain Miller, "is at the management level. These people must be very clear as to where they stand, and everyone in their command should know where they stand."

A historical insight into the depth of the race problem was given by Dr. Mitchell: "We need to understand that western edu-

cation has contained a fundamental assumption, namely, that some people were *born* to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. This assumption is deeply rooted in western civilization all the way back to Plato. Too many people comfortably assume that there must be someone at the bottom, and by an implied divine right that someone is other than themselves. Western education is the problem; it isn't the cure. What people need is a Damascus Road conversion experience which radically re-orientes their priorities."

Chaplain Wright, focusing on some of the ideas presented by Chaplain Shannon, then shifted the discussion to the subject of the chaplain and the community. "I wonder if we could say something more about chaplains getting involved in community action."

Chaplain Shannon offered the following practical advice: "When chaplains first report to a post, they should get to know the civilian leaders on and off post—clergy and non-clergy. They should know what social agencies are available, and what action needs to be taken. Then they should find out who among their troops has leadership potential, who is an eagle scout, for example. Many of these troops are keyed up for social action and can be encouraged."

Chaplain Swager suggested that a problem could develop. "I like the idea of social action," he said, "but I worry that it can be pushed too far, to the point where troops and troop commanders take over the political functions of civilian communities. I keep thinking about South American style take-overs."

"I think that the American mind-set protects us from this," replied Chaplain Shannon.

Chaplain Swager noted that a second problem could also develop. "In being active in the community, in working with civilian leaders, we also have to be careful that we don't merely perpetuate the status quo."

Chaplain Everett offered a positive and practical suggestion. "We spend millions of dollars on army public relations trying to create good will. Black and white chaplains can do a lot of good on projects like adopting needy families and helping to solve problems which exist."

The conversation then turned from social action in the community to social expectations in the chapel service. "How can we meet black social expectations within the chapel service?" Chaplain Gilbert asked. "For example, in a sermon, does it help to quote from *Soul On Ice*?"

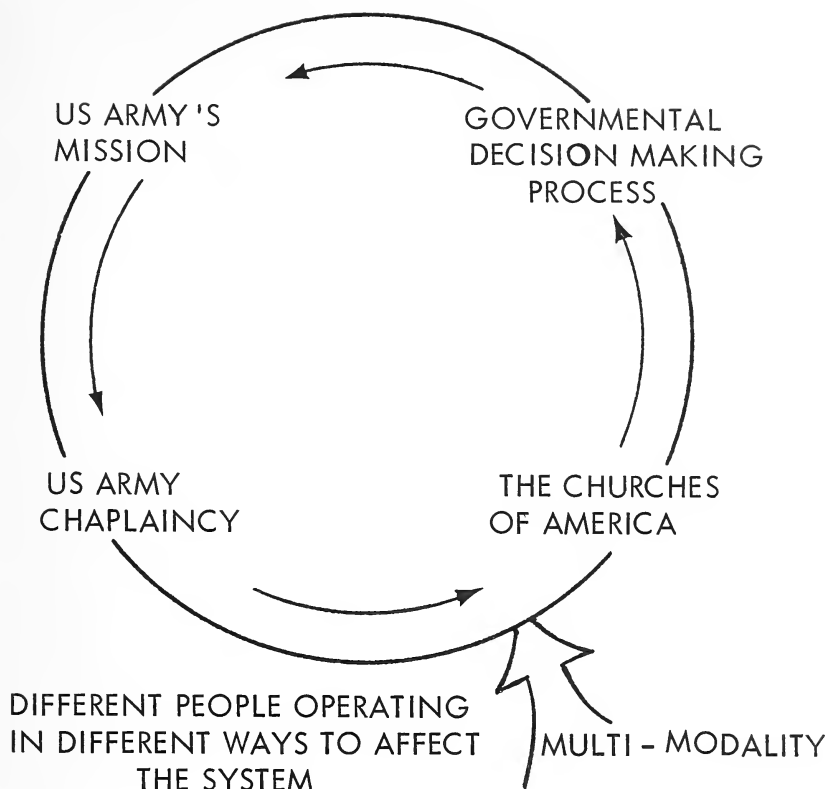
Chaplain Miller suggested that a chaplain should use "whatever he feels comfortable with" and Chaplain DeVaux reiterated his main emphasis: "We chaplains ought to be preaching to the needs of people. If we quote from a book written by a black man, the

significant thing to point out is not that the author is black, but that the quotation says something about the human situation. If you identify the author as Eldridge Cleaver, a Black Panther, white people won't have time to process their feelings of hostility. It would be better to identify the author in the coffee hour afterward, and discuss his book there."

One chaplain then asked, "How do you feel about a black chaplain emphasizing social problems to the extent that every time he goes into the pulpit he talks about what a bad deal his brothers have had?"

In reply Chaplain Tumpkin shared an insight into a communication problem which often arises. "One of the problems black chaplains encounter is that when they preach on some general Christian subject, people in the audience twist and construe their words and intentions to mean some specific social problem."

The session concluded with a comment by Chaplain Day on the relationship of individuals and institutions to social change. "We need to ask a question about the Army's mission. Is the Army an agent of social change in the civilian community? If we are going to work within the military we need to understand its structure and purpose. To what extent can we get involved in the civilian community? I'm just raising the question. We also have to ask how an individual chaplain's denomination feels about social activism. This affects the chaplain. Furthermore, the government sets many policies. The government, the Army, the chaplaincy and the churches, thus, all affect each other. Change occurs when various people, operating in various ways, do their part to affect the total system. Here's a diagram of what I'm getting at."



“Each of us should use his talents—wherever opportunities arise—to improve the system and the lives of people affected by it.”



CONCLUSIONS TO THE CONFERENCE

1. In order to minister effectively to blacks, chaplains should expose themselves to black culture—its life and literature. Integrity of words and actions should be central in the use of insights gained.
2. Positive racial awareness should be a factor in the recruitment of chaplains and should continue to be emphasized in chaplain training. Field trips to black congregations should become part of student life at the Chaplain School. A chaplain's response to such training should be an important element of evaluation in regard to retention and promotion.
3. The particular denominational or cultural background of white chaplains need not be a barrier to a successful ministry to blacks. The skin color of a black chaplain does not necessarily make him an appropriate minister to all groups of blacks.
4. Black chaplains should not be used primarily as flak catchers and troubleshooters in areas of racial unrest, as though this were the black man's problem or the black chaplain's problem. Although black chaplains have often been effectively used as resource persons, a more significant use of them would be in important positions as symbols of black expectations.
5. Visible and viable efforts should be promoted which show chaplain concern for racial issues within the military establishment, but which may have a salutary effect on the whole society and encourage healthy changes in the military system.
6. Thinking and writing by chaplains should be encouraged in support of:
 - a. Pastoral sensitivity to current psychic and religious needs of black service members.
 - b. Appreciation of black culture and its expression in religious forms.
 - c. Widening the breadth of outreach to all black service persons.
7. Chaplain actions should move in the following order of need priority:
 - a. Needs of persons on the installation.
 - b. Needs of dependents and off-post personnel.

c. Needs of all black service persons for advocacy in cases of discrimination on or off-post.

8. Chaplains should consciously but not self-consciously or apologetically include items from the black heritage in all chaplain programs.

9. Activities should not be based on crude generalizations about blacks but be constructive and creative attempts to deal with real situations and real people where they are.

10. Chaplains should be active in raising the level of sensitivity and knowledge of the leadership of the Army in regard to black persons. The key word is *dignity*.

11. Senior chaplains should support efforts by junior chaplains in socially creative actions regarding black soldiers and should not think that all failures discredit the chaplain or his efforts.

12. Although this conference has focused on ministry to blacks, the conclusions should be applied to other ethnic groups as well.

HISTORICAL NOTES

Chaplain Sampson Retires



Greeting guests in the receiving line are (l-r) Mrs. Hyatt, General Westmoreland, Chaplain Sampson and Chaplain Hyatt.

The Chaplaincy of the United States Army and the Churches and Synagogues of America honored Chaplain (Major General) Francis L. Sampson, Chief of Chaplains, on the occasion of his retirement on 22 July 1971 at a banquet held in the Washington area.

A distinguished audience of 600 guests attended, including ranking prelates of the Roman Catholic Church, the President and members of the National Jewish Welfare Board, and the presiding Bishops and officials from all major Protestant denominations in the United States. In addition principal members of the Army staff, several major commanders and representatives from other military services were present.

General William C. Westmoreland, Chief of Staff, Army, delivered the principal address, which concluded as follows:

Now here he is tonight among his friends, uncomfortable, I am sure, that we are praising him, but so much the epitome of what a man of God in uniform should be, that anything less than a full celebration would be a distortion and a tragedy. For what we celebrate is a triumph of spirit, a victory of faith in God and man—a personal demonstration that a life of danger and trial need not make a man less but can make him grow from strength to strength. We know, too, that what Chaplain Sampson is going to do will not be retirement but a continuing conspiring with the children of God on earth to help the Kingdom Come.

There is just one more thing I want to say and it's connected to names. You have noticed that I called him *Chaplain* Sampson and that's right because he has been that in all the best meaning of the term. I've called him Father, too, and that's right because he has been that in a wonderful way to so many men and women orphaned by situations and times. We could also call him Monsignor and Doctor and Chief and General, for these are titles he has earned and to which he adds luster. Still, the wonderful thing is that people call him Frank; that they can, and do, is the mark of the man.

So tonight as I close, let me say them all: Chaplain, General, Monsignor, Doctor, Frank, I know I speak for all when I say congratulations on a job done superbly. Thank you for services rendered sacrificially. Best wishes to you as you grow older gracefully.



On 3 August 1971 Chaplain Gerhardt W. Hyatt of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, was promoted to Major General and assumed the position of Chief of Army Chaplains. At a ceremony in the Pentagon, General Westmoreland and Mrs. Hyatt, pin the second star on Chaplain Hyatt.

On the same day in a ceremony held in the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain Aloysius J. McElwee of the Roman Catholic Church was promoted to Brigadier General and became Deputy Chief of Chaplains.



FIRST US ARMY'S SIX UNITED STATES RESERVE COMMANDS

In January 1967 a Department of the Army message listed military activities by state that were to be eliminated or consolidated. The genesis of this action stemmed from a Department of Defense decision to inactivate the US Army Corps. These actions triggered dramatic changes for all Reserve Forces throughout the US.

To assist the First Army Commander in directing an effective reserve program, the Commanding General, USCONARC, authorized the establishment of the office of the Deputy CG for Reserve Forces. The major concern of that office during the first half of 1968 was the organization of the US ARMY RESERVE COMMANDS (ARCOM's) to succeed the four US Army Corps in the First Army. Headquarters CONARC required the Corps to be inactivated prior to the 1968 annual training of the Reserve Forces. The result of these actions was the formation in First Army of six Army Reserve Commands to command the USAR units. These commands still exist, and the men of the units are ministered to and cared for by numerous Army Reserve Chaplains. We salute the six ARCOM Staff Chaplains, whose work and ministry continue to contribute to the ONE ARMY concept.

(1) The 77th ARCOM, Jamaica, New York, Staff Chaplain (LTC) Raymond W. Koster, Lutheran, Missouri Synod, born 16 April 1925.

(2) The 79th ARCOM, Philadelphia, Pa., Staff Chaplain (LTC) Richard K. Bauder, Episcopalian, born 29 October 1927.

(3) The 83d ARCOM, Columbus, Ohio, Staff Chaplain (MAJ) Edward W. Sensenbrenner, United Presbyterian, born 6 January 1932.

(4) The 94th ARCOM, Boston, Massachusetts, Staff Chaplain (LTC) Early D. Haywood, The Methodist Church, born 22 November 1925.

(5) The 97th ARCOM, Fort Meade, Maryland, Staff Chaplain (LTC) Charles W. Thomas, National Baptist Convention, born 11 June 1912.

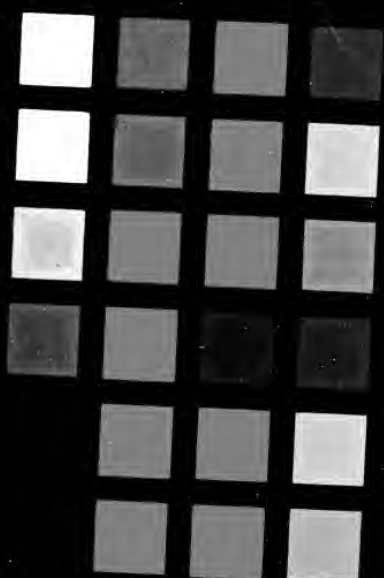
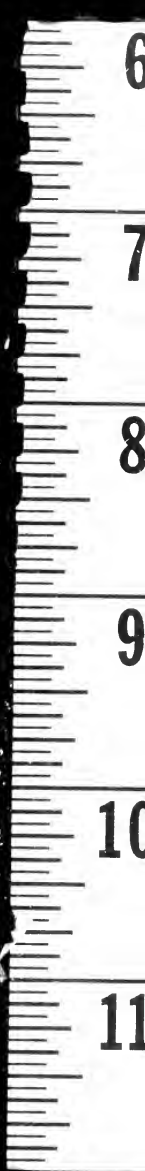
(6) The 99th ARCOM, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Chaplain (COL) Elmer C. Smith, United Presbyterian, born 12 September 1919.

Today as never before, ONE ARMY (Reserves, National Guard and active duty) guards the freedom of the world. The history of the Army Chaplaincy is the work and ministry of clergymen in uniform, under all conditions and in a world of constant change.

Chaplain (LTC) Norman R. Brown
First US. Army, Reserve Affairs







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